

LETTERS
ON THE
ENGLISH NATION:

BY
BATTISTA ANGELONI,
A JESUIT,

Who resided many years in LONDON.

Translated from the Original ITALIAN,

BY THE
AUTHOR of the MARRIAGE ACT a Novel.

*Cupio in tantis reipublicæ periculis non dissolutum
videri.* CICERO in Catalinam.

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LONDON

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ERRATA.

Vol. I. page 20, line 19, read crown, and—p. 81, l. 1, for come
r. comes—p. 83, l. 22, for I's r. first—p. 85, l. 11, r. the peo-
ple—p. 103, l. 16, dele if—p. 209, l. 12, for adapted r. adopt-
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is unknown.

Vol. II. page 16, line 5, read stretches forth—p. 25, l. 19,
for fertile r. futile—p. 30, l. 24, for prospect r. prospects—p.
47, l. 20, for tinge r. hinge—p. 51, l. 6, r. of the present—p.
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operations r. operation ; after causes dele,—p. 221, l. 16, for
die r. dies—p. 279, l. 17, for moment r. movement.





L E T T E R XXVII.

*To the Rev^d. Father FABIO MARETTI
at Rome.*

Dear Sir,

Tis a terrible thing for a traveller to pass over a country which has not had its most remarkable rivers, hills, and situations, described by poets who have written in some language universally known. It would be an excellent relief at a dull moment to fill up a letter to a correspondent with quotations of fine poesy, after having described the place in prose ; but to what purpose would all the elegant descriptions which have been given of the Thames, its forests, prospects, and paradisaic scenes, be transcribed for your eye, who understand not this language ?

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A thousand years hence, when the writers of this nation become like the Classics of ours, and English as much studied at Rome as the Latin language has been by this people, a traveller may fill up a volume, like Addison, whom you have heard of, with quotations from the ancients, as they will be then call'd, and be admired for wit which is not his own. The time may come when the Thames and Severn, rivers of England will be known in Italy by thousands, their streams renown'd, and the names of Tyber, Po, and Clitumnus, their present rivals, be forgotten in the countries through which they flow. The tomb of Shakespeare will be visited with as much adoration as that of Virgil, and with as just reason, if genius can give merit to human nature. Clarendon will be remember'd as Livy, and Milton rever'd as the Homer of old Greece. Bacon and Newton adored as the superior productions of the creation. Alas! I live a thousand years too soon to travel in this country with eclat. This gives me no other pain, but that of being deprived of enriching this letter with something worthy your regard; however at the time of the millennium, when we shall be all upon earth again,

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again, and understand all languages, I shall make another voyage on purpose for that reason.

UNDER the present circumstances there can be nothing said of this country, more than that the rivers flow amidst the fairest meadows enriched with lowing herds and flocks, adorned with aspiring elms, and cover'd with the finest verdure. The hills are crowned with perennial oaks, the golden corn waves to the breathing breeze, and tho' no olive-trees or vineyards grace the soil, the trees are loaded with the ruddy pear and yellow apple, presage of liquor that rivals the old Falernian or Sabine wine. Plenty bursts forth to every view ; a cleanliness unknown to the peasants of any nation, is visible in every village ; the country seems yet untainted ; the smiling face of liberty shines amongst the inhabitants, and a wealth which no people ever boasted, of their rank, is to be found amongst the farmers of this isle.

WITH these people, integrity is yet to be found ; they love the country which gave them

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birth,

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birth, and breathe a spirit becoming the Romans in their days of untainted virtue, too steady to be seduced by ministerial influence ; and thus, being above all temptation to their country's ruin, are forbidden to bear or possess arms for its defence. Nothing is so dreadful to a corrupted administration as untainted probity.

BUT why am I painting the situation of these people, or upbraiding the ministry that undoes them ? I am an alien here ; what charm has this land for me ? Alas ! it is or ought to be the universal affliction of mankind to think that without some sudden intervention, the rosy cheek of health must fade in pining slavery ; the heart, which at present prompts the spirit of mirth in evening songs beneath the shady beach, must be loaded with anxiety, and sighs burst from that bosom, that now breathes the voice of jollity ! Such the dreary moment paints them to my imagination.

AMONGST the rural inhabitants of all the nations I have seen, none equal the natives of this country ; the farmer has a liberal air, and the

the females a beauty not to be found in any other place. The peasants of Italy have a famished mein and poverty of aspect. The French the same, or even worse ; they seem another race of mortals from the people of condition in their respective countries ; nothing of this kind appears in England, all is of another cast.

METHINKS the very horses and cattle participate of this state, and have an air of freedom not to be seen in those of other nations ; at least they are handsomer than the animals of our country. Perhaps it is that prevalent love of beauty in us which creates this sentiment of freedom in their favour.

WHEREVER we pass, there are no remains but those of abbies, ruined houses, where once the church triumphed in splendour and magnificence. Alas ! the fatted ox comes no more to these habitations, and the sleek monk blesses the teeming board no more, nor quaffs the sparkling liquor down his roseay throat ! Such revolutions have attended the sons of St. Peter in this kingdom.

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THE good sense of the common people is amazing to those strangers who visit this country: in all conversation where they can be supposed to understand the subject at all, they shew a degree of knowledge not to be found amongst the peasants of any nation; the meanest labourer has something to say in his favour, which cannot be met with in any other place.

THIS advantage they draw from being accustomed to think for themselves; their minds are naturally inquisitive; and not being slavishly dependant on priest or master, there is a liberality of thinking amongst them all, and a probity not easily conceived: the poor of the country-villages, who gain their daily bread, are extremely honest, and have not yet lost the influence of religion. Liberty effects this amongst small numbers and ruins great.

IN London amongst the lower class all is anarchy, drunkenness, and thievery; in the country good order, sobriety and honesty, unless in manufacturing towns, where the resemblance of London is more conspicuous. No country can be

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be more inviting to pass the summer in than this ;
the heats are temperate, the verdure in the fields
the most brilliant, and continues through the year ;
even the autumn is far from being disagreeable ;
but alas ! the dreary winter makes me sigh for
the sunny shores of Bajæ ; the serenity of sky, and
tepid breezes of that place, added to this clime,
would make the whole Elysium. Adieu,

I am yours most affectionately.

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LET-

LETTER XXVIII.

*To the Reverend Father DOMINICO
MANZONI, at Rome.*

Dear Sir,

NO where is the word *liberty* mention'd with so much ardour as in England, and no where less understood. The general meaning of it, as it is received in this nation, is the power of each man doing what he pleases, and preventing the rest from doing the same thing : this is rather sovereignty than freedom ; and as people know in this country, that property and title beget a kind of despotism, it is a common thing to add in the advertisement of the sale of an estate, as a recommendatory consideration, a *nota bene*, “ No Lord within ten miles of it.”

THIS desire of liberty so constantly in the mouth of man, and yet in his practice so little to be found with an inclination to allow it to others, has often made me reflect whether this was so natural a passion as has been asserted? and

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if the love of power was not more original and native, than that of freedom ?

BUT after some reflection I am led to believe the love of power, is nothing more than the love of liberty carried beyond its due proportion, in the laws of society and nature. Men in general, at least in this kingdom, scarce think themselves free as long as they find any opposition to their desires ; every impulse of passion that meets an obstacle, is conceived as an objection to their freedom : a man therefore fanries that independancy and liberty are the same things ; for that reason he must endeavour to subdue all around him to his inclinations ; for no ambitious man thinks himself free as long as others can check him in his attempts. Thus the mind steals from that liberty which belongs to all, to an independancy which belongs to none ; and from thence to that of power over others for the sake of being quite independant ; and then it terminates in despotism, if no opposition destroy its design. Tyranny itself seems to make this progress in the minds of men : thus absolute power seems to be a combination of

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of two objects of the same passion, love of self and liberty.

THE truth of this seems to be confirmed by observations on mankind every where. Tyrants have generally shewn the strongest self-love of all others ; in avarice sometimes, at others, in plundering for the sake of profusion on themselves ; in murders, thro' fear of the destruction of self. Thus it may be I think fairly said, that the desire of power is the love of liberty mixt with the excess of self-love.

IF this be true, it should be the pursuit of all free states as much as possible to endeavour to throw the passion of self-love into disgrace, to brand with sarcasm the miser's forehead, and keep the incense on the altars of generosity and liberality eternally burning. A king, of all demeaning dispositions, can have none so criminal as personal avarice, to his nation ; his heart should be open to the men of science and men of art ; and that truly royal spirit of giving to the meritorious, should gain him the universal affection of a people ; which it will never effect, if it be given indiscriminately without distinction : yet avarice is

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is even worse than dissipation, and is the most unroyal of all the qualities of the heart; without the spirit of generosity, with justice, mercy, understanding, and all other virtues, a crowned head receives no applause, nothing more than a frigid approbation from the voice of fame.

Now tho' all men may be said to be born free, yet none can be said to be born independant; that never was the state of nature since the first race became men; all that is in liberty is a right to that which is the common lot of mankind: the child is born in a state of dependancy on the parents, and even when grown up, in nations where there is the least property. Amongst the Indians men are not independant; there is a due submission to the man of the first understanding, to courage, to strength, and many other qualities of the soul and body, which naturally take off the independancy of most, tho' not the liberty. And tho' these individuals so endowed may seem less dependant than the rest, yet numbers render them dependant also: independant no man can be, in a nation which stands in need of the qualities and capacities of particular men to support it; yet he is free because they

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they have no right to deprive him of his possessions.

FROM these attributes of superior understanding, superior courage, and superior strength, in uncivilized states is derived the authority which one man has over another; this is naturally yielded to him by those who taste the advantage that he is of to the community; thence arose the ideas of chiefs and kings in the savage nations, from a sense of superior abilities and a sense of gratitude mixt, and yet without loss of liberty. In countries long civilized the same exalted talents, added to those of generosity and many other humane qualities which wealth brings, or should bring into fashion, will obtain an authority undisputed; and the great people, exerting those qualifications, will find that men, from their dependant state in nature, let their country be ever so free, will pay that due subordination which is established in the first principles of all things.

YET if they chuse another method, and strive to render themselves independant, by exerting the powers which riches procure them against
their

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their fellow-countrymen, by keeping them in continual fear ; the mind, instead of acknowledging an authority in those despotic tempers, detests the cause, and only lies silent till some occasion offers of exerting its endeavours, against this which they feel with so much anguish.

K I N G S then, tho' born to power, should support it with generosity, and making that which they have a right to by the laws and customs of their country, to proceed from the natural dispositions of human kind, obtain an authority in the heart of a nation, which is not to be purchased by any other means.

I T was this disposition in Lewis the fourteenth which made him the darling of the French : he instituted honors, rewarded merit, supported and cherished sciences and arts, was polite to all, and thus became the idol of that people whom his ambition and wars brought more than once to die without regret, of the sword, famine and disease.

If any thing can create genius, it must be such a disposition ; when the rewards for excellent productions come from those hands which are
the

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the most esteemed by the sons of men : if it cannot create genius, it begets the next of all things to it ; it animates a common soul to moments of superior conception, and passages of exalted understanding. That the English nation has richly deserved encouragement from their princes, is surely indisputable ; yet to this hour there is not an establishment in their favour. The ministry seem to shun men of great sense, and liberality has fled the land. No man of letters is acceptable to the great, they look on him as a kind of satire on their actions, and feeling within their own vacuity, are by no means pleased with beholding in another what they want themselves.

THIS is not the practice of other nations : men of letters are received with peculiar honors in France and Italy by the nobility ; and by that means the liberal behaviour begets an authority over the man of science, which makes *him* the dependant of that person, and unites his knowledge with the other's power and interest.

THIS management is well understood in France, where ministers, and other great men, apply the talents

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talents of men of letters to their use and the public advantage ; and thus liberality begets authority, and every idea of arbitrary power is lost. From this it is that those who live in France, tho' their government is more despotic than the English, have more apparent freedom and ease than is to be seen in this island.

THE exertion of power is seen there in nothing but in cases of much ill behaviour ; and all that which might be carried by the superiority of one man above another, by a kind of force which would make it arbitrary, is converted by politeness into that sense of authority and dependance, which is natural for men to have over and from one another : this being the custom universally in use in that country, whatever may be the establishment, it is really and in fact liberty : and after all the examination which I can make, from the security of property, ease of mind, and gaiety of temper of the two people, taking into the account the desire which almost all Englishmen have of possessing power by fear or force, and Frenchmen of obtaining authority by politeness and liberality ; I assure you that I think the citizens of Paris as free as the citizens of London,

London, and the French as happy in that respect as the Britons.

AT least men of letters are happier in that city than in this ; and tho' the lamp of learning is near expiring in England, yet no one stretches his hand to recruit it with fresh oil : the flame, I believe, quivers already ; I shall see its total extinction before I leave England ; after which, I shall only tarry to attend its remains and behold it quietly inurned, make a small epitaph, institute a mass to be said for its repose, and fly to your arms in Rome ; and thus end my life where it began. Adieu, I am

Yours most sincerely.

LET-

LETTER XXIX.

*To the Reverend Father LORENZO
FRANCIOSINI at Rome.*

Dear Sir,

YESTERDAY amusing myself with a walk in that church where the monuments of illustrious men of this nation are mostly placed, amongst others I remarked that of the great Newton, where, in a bas-relief, the other orbs of this solar system are weighed by boys against the sun, on a stillyard.

THIS naturally led me to think on the fate of those philosophies, which from the earliest account of times have come down to us thro' Aristotle to Descartes, and Newton; each of the former exploded by all living writers, unless you except Monsr. Fontenelle; and the latter attacked by the late Mr. Hutchinson and his followers, a sect of enthusiastic philosophers, who fancying they have found in the history of Moses, the best system of the heavens and natural philosophy, decry all others as delusive.

THIS reflection led me naturally to consider the unstable state of truth, as well as that of fashion, and thence the feeble condition of the human mind, as it is generally found to exist in most beings of our species. The system of Ptolomy, and the natural history of Aristotle and Pliny, were followed and received as undoubted truth for many ages. Copernicus and Descartes driving these from the opinions of mankind, won the whole world to their manner of conceiving things ; the first of these remains generally received, and the philosophy of the latter, which was designed to explain the revolutions of the planets, is, as I have already said, almost totally exploded. Fontenelle alone, at ninety-six, like a sepulchral lamp, remains quivering over the dead body.

IF we should scrutinize too severely into the minds of men, how contemptibly must we think of their capacities ; they have followed the different professors of each philosophy by thousands ; embracing error, not under the idea of an object of belief, but of reason ; dignifying that with the name of absolute truth, which at

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present appears to be absolute falsehood. What is this supreme reason of man, that is so easily deluded? or is there any truth belonging to reason in man, the result of numbers excepted, beyond that which is to be found in any other faculty?

IF we should judge from the analogy and experience of past times, we must conclude, there is no such thing as truth; because all that has been discovered and received anciently as true, is now known and received as false. Every philosopher has sunk into obscurity, with his system; and all reverence for him, and that, vanished together with time.

PERHAPS the day will come, when some fertile imagination may ingeniously dethrone this hypothesis of the great Newton, and prove that immortality belongs no more to systems, than to men.

WHETHER this be true or not, the experience of past ages, and the long unsettled state of truth, should teach us to examine with caution, and pronounce with modesty; either on other people's opinion, or our own.

Let us imagine, as probably it is, that the system of this amazing man, is the true one of the universe; we may admire indeed, that wonderful sagacity which could penetrate such abstruse matters; and yet, how short in utility and comprehension is this degree of knowledge, to that of a legislator.

Newton has discovered that the planets and sun, perhaps all other planets and suns, are counterpoised and attracted by one another. The system of nature was before this discovery fixed, and the whole revelation is the principle which moves these orbs, and the laws which they observe. In human nature, the subtlety of discovering that passions, reason, senses, faith, and imagination in man, counterpoise one another, is not sufficient, tho' equally difficult; all the objects which influence each, must be proportioned and applied to make society proceed happily and well.

Is not the genius which is capable of such force and efficacy, as much beyond that of Newton, as his was beyond the conception of other

mathematicians and philosophers of that kind? the one only explains the system of natural bodies as they are guided in their course, and the other creates a system by which nature is to be governed, in the conduct and commerce of men: one has discovered how nature proceeds; yet supplies no materials; the other must know her operations, and supply objects also. Whether there ever has been any legislator so perfect in his kind, as the great Newton was in his, pray tell me in your next letter, you who have studied him with such amazing application, and know mankind so intimately?

METHINKS greatness of genius of any kind, can never be sufficiently admired or encouraged; when we find from the history of all nations, how few men have ever possessed the faculties of invention and contriving new probable systems, from the known powers and properties of nature; is it not surprizing that their reward has been so small, and their esteem scarce taken place, till they were beyond all beneficial influence, from its good or ill reception?

PERHAPS if a father had the power of obtaining, what degree of genius he would chuse to be given to his son, he would wish for the most exalted, as most likely to succeed in the affairs of this life; and yet I verily believe, that an inferior degree is that which promises fairest to make its way in the world.

A very superior genius is too much above the general comprehension, to be known immediately; the size of the understanding is like that of the bodies of men, each extends to a certain degree, and no farther; by that means it comes to pass, that whatever is extremely above the common understanding passes unremarked, it is out of reach but to few: there are not men of genius enough at one time in a kingdom, capable of extending to his conceptions, and to create it a stable reputation; the author dies before his work meets applause, or receives the reward or praise due to his merit.

WHEREAS the foremost of the second rate of understandings, writes to the conception and

apprehension of all ; his fame, like flame in dry straw, blazes, dazzles, spreads, and expires in a very short time ; the former beginning by slow degrees in fuel difficultly set on fire, is long in spreading its influence, but is lasting and cherishing when it has once taken firm possession.

THUS for the mortal self and short-lived honor, a middling degree of genius is the most useful ; but for the immortality of fame the latter. Will a father then rather desire exalted fame when his son shall be no more, or less of that and success together ? It has been said, that Bacon's genius was considered as wild and romantic, as it appeared in his writings, to the wits of those days ; and that knowledge which excelled all the world, and almost exceeded humanity, could not obtain him sustenance from the prince on the throne, after he had proved that he was subjected to the foibles of man. Milton's paradise lost past unobserved, till Mr. Dryden called the attention of the world upon it ; Shakespeare was postponed to Ben Johnson during his life, and his works so little esteemed, that they never engaged the author to give a correct edition, the whole being taken from the

prompter's books. Sir Isaac Newton himself was not at all considered, till some foreign mathematician, I think Huygens, had read his book long after it was printed ; and discovered to the world the treasures it contained : these were men of the greatest genius.

AT the same time, Mr. Addison who wanted taste in all things, as his remarks on Bologna in Italy may convince you ; where he says, the three most curious things in that city, are a stair-case, a medal, and a St. Cecilia, painted by Raphael ; preferring the two first, and not once mentioning those inimitable paintings of the Carracci and their disciples ; he appears a baby in his pretensions to knowledge of a superior kind, that of defending christianity, and explaining the powers and pleasures of imagination ; and a school-boy in sublime poetry ; this man received applause beyond all other writers during his life ; as did Mr. Pope, who tho' an excellent poet, was in the nature of his writings infinitely inferior to Shakespeare and Milton.

THE understanding and productions of these modern poets of this island, are such as are adapted

adapted to the capacities of the number, and thus pleasing every where, bequeathed their authors an encomium much beyond their desert.

TIME however is doing justice to these men ; the former grow yet more and more adored, the rock is immovable on which they stand ; whilst the hill of sand which supported the other, is mouldering away beneath the feet of their reputation, and deserting them every minute.

To this incapacity of comprehending that which belongs to true genius, I imagine it is, that the most able ministers are seldom employed in a state. Those who should choose, cannot penetrate into those intuitive truths which they lay before them : what is not understood by their capacities appears like scheming, nonsense, fairy land, or vision ; and thus the most able heads are prevented from saving their country, whilst such specious and fertile capacities as the late Lord Bolingbroke's, catch every ear and give their possessors place and power ; like fly-traps, round which the insects hum, and flick at last. The only man of late years, that could serve
this

this kingdom as a minister, has been but little employed and soon rejected ; those who buzz in royal ears, did not conceive the designs of his superior genius ; or rather jealous, and preferring themselves to their country's welfare, duped their master and the public good to their resentments.

SUCH is the fate of superior genius : It is my wish and ambition, *ut sit mens sana in corpore sano*, and a heart warmed with gratitude for your goodness.

I am yours most affectionately.

L E T -

LETTER XXX.

*To the Reverend Father DIODATO
FRANZONI, at Rome.*

Dear Sir,

NOT long since on a journey into that part of this kingdom, which is called Wales, from whence the eldest sons of the kings of Great-Britain take their titles, I found more remains of ancient vassalage amongst the common people, and a greater simplicity of manners, than is to be met with in England.

THE language is yet spoken by the present people, which was in use in the time of Cæsar's invasion ; and, if you believe the natives, as it was by our first parents in paradise ; it has not an ill sound when put into verse, as it was repeated to my ears by a gentleman of the country ; yet I believe, it would be difficult for a stranger to acquire it ; particularly an Italian. Nothing can be more different than the pronunciation of these two languages ; the words in our tongue terminating in vowels, and those in this having scarce

any

any in use in their alphabet. For this reason strength makes the excellence in the Welch, as sweetness does in the present Roman ; and it seems impossible for a stranger to obtain a true pronunciation, without practising with something boiling hot in his mouth. There is a singular custom amongst the people of this part of the island, which is extremely useful, and worthy imitation : Whenever two servants have an inclination to marry, they make it known to their masters, and he to his friends, who all send them something to begin housekeeping ; besides this, there are in different parts, persons who are called bidders, from the use they make of them, who are sent round from house to house to their whole acquaintance.

WHEN a couple is to be wedded, there is one chosen on each side ; they are drest in their best apparel, and with a long staff to which are tyed knots of riobands, their hats being decorated with the same finery, are sent out as ambassadors. These are the public orators, and chosen from the best speakers amongst the common people, which office they always preserve. Deck'd out in this pomp they proceed two differ-

ent

rent ways, and entering into the houses, where they are ordered to go, make their speeches much in this manner :

DAVID and Mary intend to marry on such a day ; their father and mother, David and Mary, and their relations, have sent me to bid you to the wedding ; whatever you shall give them at that time, shall be restored at your nuptials (if they are unmarried), or to those of your friends, when they shall be married ; and in their names I bid you a good day.

By this means it often happens, that if the couple which intends being married, has lived in reputable service, they shall receive a hundred guineas to begin the world ; and from this sum down to thirty is the general receipt.

Two days before the wedding they meet together in the house where this couple is to live, and bring their gifts, when they pass the evening in merriment, and dance ; and, what is something surprizing, they all perform that exercise with an ease and grace, which I have not seen amongst any peasants in Europe.

THEY

THEY then meet at the same house on the nuptial day ; whence thy proceed on horseback to the church, two women upon some horses, two men upon others, a man and a woman, women before men, void of all order : Before them is the best music they can get, the harp always, which being suspended about the harper's shoulders ; he plays as the horse trots along, as fast as he can, a random struming of the strings. The harp and St. David are the most venerable objects of the Welch people ; they are great lovers of music and singing ; and have one poet very renouned, whose works they sing at all festivals.

IN this manner they ride with great swiftness to the church to be married ; the haste they make is to signify the impetuosity of their love for each other. The ceremony being finished, the company returns to make merry, which continues till evening : When having put the new couple to bed, they retire below again ; and after passing an hour in mirth, and making caudel for the bridegroom, they return again into the chamber, and carry him this invigorating liquor, as a restorative, consider'd highly necessary in this moment ;

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moment; not forgetting a species of joking, which will not well bear being translated into Italian.

This is the Welch way of marrying amongst the common people and servants ; by which you see the first difficulties of coming together are surmounted, marriage much encouraged ; and this without taking any thing from another, which he or his are not to have again when he pleases to demand it : This is converting small sums to great use, and drawing advantage from numbers of poor people, no where practised but in this part of the island.

It would be a custom highly useful for the poor of Italy, where a priest might exercise this function of a bidder with great eclat ; and the public be considerably benefited by this ceremony. It will render people less timid in coming to the care of a family, and repeople the country more than any other encouragement I can think of ; and this without taxing any one, a matter of great consideration in all public benefits. This custom, good as it is, is not used by the English, perhaps not known to them.

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LETTER XXX. 31

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THEY have another very singular custom, which is that of covering for a whole year, the pourtrait of a person who is lately dead, with a mourning veil of black transparent crape, a kind of wearing weeds for himself: there were some hundred prints of Sir Watkin Williams Wynne, a great favourite in this part of the kingdom, hung with crape after his death; scarce a house in North Wales without one of them, and in some, one in every room, in others one in every pannel; from thence you may judge of his power, whilst alive. He was always complimented by his countrymen with the title of king in Wales. The country is in most parts mountainous, yet not sterile; the hills being covered with grass and flocks of sheep; it seems there were herds of goats formerly in great plenty; which animal, I know not the reason, is held in great contempt by the English, notwithstanding his beard, that type of wisdom; and is applied as a piece of ridicule and farcasm by them, when they would satirize a Welchman; this satire has almost extirpated the race of goats. Many of the vallies are fertile, and the rivers fine; the prospect yield to nothing in Italy; falling waters, ruin'd castles, woods, lawns and rivers,

rivers, distant oceans, rising hills ; all conspire to make it the study of a landscape-painter ; no country yields a greater variety than this, to men who love to be entertain'd by those rural pleasures.

YET for one English gentleman who crosses the river Severn to see this part of his nation, there are a hundred who travel into Italy, and neglect being acquainted with their fellow-inhabitants. It is reputablc to have seen the cascades of Tivirone, and not know those of their own country. The peasants, tho' as free by law as those of England, retain yet a great deal of that obedience to their landlords, which was paid the Barons of old ; and that fiertè so much attributed to the English, is yet ten times more visible in this part amongst men of fortune, than in England. The wife in Wales is scarce more than a housekeeper, and the husband much a sovereign.

THE natives are hospitable, and entertain strangers with a liberal and not unpolite air. Here you may live, with one precaution, in great plenty ; you must remember, that your political principles

coincide thoroughly with those of the master of the house, or perhaps the evening sacrifice to Bacchus may procure you an expulsion ten miles distance from an habitable house at midnight, if you should differ from him in his notions of state affairs. The Chevalier de St. George has his health often drank in this country ; which is most certainly a blooming promise of success, after more than sixty years exile.

THE peasants wear no shoes about their houses, and in their common travelling the roads they carry them in their hands, and wash their feet near the towns which they are travelling to, when they put on them, and their stockings ; many of them however have none. And yet, these poor creatures would think themselves doom'd to perpetual slavery, if they were obliged to wear wooden shoes ; the ideas of wooden shoes, slavery, and French, being all link'd together in their imaginations ; they would scarce prefer them to confinement without, and as soon wear chains, as preserve their feet from injury by these contrivances ; the flattering idea of being free, tho' barefooted, gives them no little consolation amidst as much slavery as poverty and dependence

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ance can bequeath ; except in imagination, the place, perhaps, where that and all our pleasures begin and end.

THERE is one remarkable and very essential difference, between these people and the Scotch ; the first defend their countrymen and country in conversation, and retire if possible to live amongst their relations, when they have saved some little fortune in England ; the latter speak highly of Scotland and Scotchmen, but never choose to see the land from whence they came. I am more inclined to think the Welchman sincere, than the Scot, in his attachment to his country ; and for this reason, the latter being presbyterians, from which race I have remarked hypocrisy is almost inseparable ; the highlanders, who are episcopalians, resemble the Welch.

THE inhabitants are extremely subject to anger, and to take revenge by law ; they resemble amongst the English, the Normans in France ; their passions and parties precipitate them into very strange decisions in their public trials, where

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they are jurymen ; insomuch, that all disputes of consequence are carried into the cities of England to be decided by the English juries, who have no partiality for either side in the debate.

THIS is what I have collected for you in Wales, and tho' not so fashionable, nor the voyage so dangerous as going to measure the pyramids of Egypt, visiting the catacombs and cataracts of the Nile ; yet perhaps, the Welch custom of weddings, being put in execution in Italy, would impart as much utility, as all P——'s voyage, which you assure me you have lately laboured thro' ; I imagine by way of penance, instead of lashing yourself with a whip of thongs ; surely your lent must have been severe, if as you tell me you abstained during that time from all good sense, and lived on such terrible meagre.

INDEED I could send you many drawings of ruins from this part, but alas ! we abound with too many of them in our own country ; and tho' I venerate the remains of ancient palaces and temples ; I am enemy enough to that taste,

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taste, to wish every stone of old Rome converted into some useful and habitable building, and the city in its former glory and extent, tho' all the inscriptions and sculptures were demolished. Heaven defend this and me from the eyes and tongue of vértu. I am,

Yours most sincerely.

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L E T T

LETTER XXXI.

To the Reverend Father VINCENZO SPINELLO at Rome.

Dear Sir,

IN this country profusion is luxury, and whatever costs much money is always extremely polite ; for that reason it is polite to dine with the nobility, where you pay the servants for ten times as much as you eat. An open table, in this city, would ruin every man of a small estate to be entertained at it.

ONE would be led to imagine, that the English were determined to destroy all subordination, by the treatment of their servants ; they give them greater wages than in any country on earth ; they are better fed than all others ; even the common maid servants must have their tea twice a day, in all the parade of quality ; they make it their bargain at first : this very article amounts to as much as the wages of servants in Italy.

BESIDES

BESIDES this, the money which is given to the men servants by visitors, makes the place of a domestic a more considerable thing, than many small trades ; this expence however is not the greatest mischief : the servants have very little attachment to those they serve ; this disposition seems to take place, from the minister, to the servants of servants of servants ; self is the sole motive, and that never makes a true union between those who serve, and those who are served. That interest which keeps them with you, will in a greater degree separate them from you ; a servant secretly gets a better place, that is, where there are better vales, than with his present master, and leaves him in a month ; this is not esteemed a fault, because it is become the general acknowledgment, that interest ought to be the sole ruling principle of human kind. The servant hears this whilst he stands behind his master's chair ; he sees him practise it in life, and like a good pupil follows his example. This method of leaving a master suddenly being no objection, if the servant be tolerably good he finds another place, and is little solicitous about plea-

sing those he serves ; it is from other hands he receives his chief income, and the master is but little regarded.

IN Italy, servants having no dependance but on those they serve, must study to obey and please their masters ; that domestic who changes his place often, loses his character, and is reduced to great extremity. He who continues long in one house, has besides his present wages the hopes of a future supply, by a pension in old age, or at the death of his master : thus the French and Italians, tho' not half so well paid as the English in their wages, not considering their vales, are ten times better, and more obedient in their service ; they strive to please for the sake of being approved of, and finding provision when they are no longer able to work. Whereas, an English servant knowing he has no future expectations from his master, enjoys the present time, dissipates, and finds no solace by an annual pension in his declining days. In my opinion, those of our nation and France are happier than the English ; they have every thing for their support which is necessary, and the ambition of their masters clothes them well ;

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their hearts are at ease, and their actions encouraged by knowing that faithful service always obtains a reward for old age.

I NEED not write a farther comment, or notes, to illustrate the truth of what has been said ; to prove that the English nobility and gentry ruin their being well served, by a licentious and mistaken habit of suffering their servants to receive money from any other person but themselves. In fact, the domestic scarce conceives himself the menial servant of him who supplies him with his daily bread and apparel, and in general has very little good-will towards him.

FROM this one evil habit of giving money to servants, the nobility of no nation appear so mean as the English ; my lord looks on whilst his guest discharges the house, by paying the servants ; and no servants are in any comparison so insolent and inattentive in their service, because they know that it is not his lordship's hands from which they receive their money.

THE reformation of these abuses will arrive with the general reformation of the nation ;
when

when the public funds being no more able to supply the ministerial demand, the whole takes a new turn, and the want of money brings purer manners and more œconomy.

THIS is not so far off as the day of judgment, to my eyes. The kingdom appears to me like those fruits which are extremely fair to the eye, and rotten at the core ; the malady has begun from the heart ; or like a body, which has long lain interred and unmoved, which, appearing firm and substantial to the view, is sure to tumble into dust the very first shake which it receives.

THO' an alien and sojourner in the land, I sincerely pray, that this may be prevented ; there are yet an infinity of worthy people remaining amongst those who are neither the very highest nor very lowest ; and indeed some in the first, tho' they are hindered from their country's service, and as it were exiled for their virtues. Adieu,

I am yours most affectionately.

L E T.

LETTER XXXII.

*To the Reverend Father BATISTA
GUARINI, at Rome.*

Dear Sir,

IT is not in medicine alone, that quackery takes place in this island above all others ; it is in every other art and science ; the painters even make their fortune in proportion, as they mix more or less of that with their profession and colours ; some chuse a new manner of colouring, others of painting drapery, and one who would paint his figures upside-down, would succeed to a miracle ; but lastly here is a prodigy arrived from Paris ; a wonder who has carried all before him, and all this by dint of beard. This man being extremely well acquainted with the prevailing passion of this nation, and their manner of reasoning, which is, that if a man is extraordinary in any thing, he must be in all ; has made the best use of a beard, that any man has made of it since the days of Adam. He goes drest in the Persian or Turkish habit, with this type of wisdom reaching to his middle.

THIS

THIS singularity of dress has given him an air of superiority, and credit of being a singular good painter; he has had double the price of all others; and yet, if it was not for his beard, he would not be a better painter, nay not so good, as many who reside in London. Thus, whilst he gets five and twenty guineas for a three quarters length; Soldé, who is as good at least as any in this kingdom, is glad to get half that money: The first has as many as he can paint, and Soldé has not so many as he ought. At present the people of England seem to be more captivated with what is new, than what is extraordinary; and are more pleased with singularity in the person who produces any thing in arts and science, than with the production itself: it is this which has made this painter's performances so valuable. They have measured the value of his works by the length of his beard, and conclude as much in favour of the excellency of the one as the longitude of the other; it is the rarity of a painter with a beard, that has drawn him the reputation of a great master in his art. This is the first time I have known beards being the type of any thing but wisdom: If he painted

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in oil, I should imagine he made his brushes of his beard, and succeeded by virtue of that advantage ; but he paints in craions.

IN other parts of polite studies, the same manner of thinking has often prevail'd ; here is now an instance of a thresher, a very honest man indeed, who was made a divine and librarian to the late queen at Richmond, because he had found out the method of threshing words into verses ; the excellency of the work is not consider'd, it is the wonder of a peasant's being a poet, which gained him his living and honours, during which time many others who were good poets, were starving without the least reward.

BESIDES this man, here is another mechanic, who is the candidate for the Laurel, after the present poet Laureat : This man has written a very indifferent tragedy, which has had great success, because it was the work of a brick-layer.

IN fact, this appears to me to be extremely mortifying to men of genius ; their works are not attended with any esteem or honor, because they are the productions of men destined to study,

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study, whilst those of a thresher or bricklayer are admired, because coming from their hands. At the same time, it is no small reflection on those who should support letters, that their patronage is bestowed on such understandings, and denied to men of true merit. This encouragement has already robb'd the world of two useful men to make two useless ones ; and who knows where it may end ? Humanity would be apt to conceive that this arises from want of taste, not distinguishing what true merit is, and malice from a mean jealousy which will not encourage it.

IN every kind of work, the excellency of the workman in general is not consider'd here, as in France and Italy ; the common artist is paid almost as well as the best, and what can only be accomplish'd by one in a million, is as little esteemed, as that which can be performed by one in ten.

FOR this reason it is that the most exquisite works in graving, sculpture, and painting, can with difficulty be brought to the highest perfection in London. An artist must starve if he waited to give his pieces the last finishings ; he gets as much money by doing well, as if he excelled

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led all the world ; whereas in France and Italy, he would be paid any price for that which no other could do, and not half what he receives in England for executing what he perform'd only as well as many other artists. This is therefore the land at present for mediocrity in all things, and exclusion of excellency in any.

IN what I have said, there is not one word to be applied to the mechanic instruments of use ; they are finished to a degree of perfection, that is not to be seen in any other country : Utility is the reigning idea of all that is done here, and taste in that of Paris ; for which reason England has the trade in one kind, and France in the other. And tho' a fine imagination may not be so much pleased with the English as the French productions ; yet commodity makes a good amends for a small deficiency in figure ; and not one in twenty, but is better pleased with the polish and tinge, than with the design of the whole performance. All see, but few have any taste.

IN all objects which are offered to the eye, the French have an elegance and taste which is much beyond that of England, and the English finish the French designs better than their own work-

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workmen: Ornaments in diamonds are much better disposed at Paris than London, and the setting much better in this city than in France.

ONE respects the elegant fancy, and the other the elegant hand of the jeweller; and thus in most kinds of manufactures, the designs of France should be combined with the execution of England, to make a production perfect.

FROM what has been said you may be inclined to believe, that, as taste and design are the effects of genius, and elegant finishing the consequence of patience and a mechanic hand the French surpass the English in genius: this is by no means true, I believe; and my next shall bring you the reasons. Adieu,

I am yours affectionately.

L E T -

LETTER XXXIII.

*To the Reverend Father PHILIPPO
LAURA, at Rome.*

Dear Sir,

THE gentlemen of no nation in Europe travel so much, as those of this kingdom, into foreign countries. A man that has not seen Italy is scarce polite company in London : Even Palmyra, hid in deserts, could not save her ruins from the examination of English travellers.

Two gentlemen have visited that place, accompanied with another who understood architecture and drawing ; in consequence of which, they have given to the public the ruins of that ancient city, in several well executed prints ; and an account of its former and present state, as far as can be drawn from history ; and those remains, in the most pleasing manner, written with exquisite taste and modesty. It has been the particular honor of England, to have some of their nobility and gentry in private

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stations, to perform undertakings, worthy the royal encouragement ; and its peculiar disgrace to have had their ministers negligent in every thing, that may do honor and bring utility to the public.

No nation is at so much expence to visit the works of art, which other kingdoms have produced, as this of England. Italy has received more money from the gentlemen of England, for seeing the paintings of the Italian schools, than they originally cost from the hands of the painters ; probably more than a hundred times that sum ; to say nothing of that vast number of paintings, which has been sold to this and other nations. It is really equal to an estate or tax levied on England, and may not unjustly be call'd Peter's-pence ; it brings vast sums into Rome annually, not to mention that opportunity which our painters have, from copying the works of their predecessors, and selling them for originals to the connoisseurs of all nations.

WHAT shall we say, after having seen with what avidity they visit all these prodigies of genius in arts and sculpture, at Rome and other cities,

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cities, when at their return they grow indifferent about the promoting similar performances in their own nation, and rivaling the artists of others.

ENGLAND has not yet produced a good face-painter, much less an historical ; of all the productions the present performers who have been born in England, there is not one of them will be ask'd, [of whose hand it is forty years hence, and perhaps the whole production of one master, amass'd together, will not sell at that time for as much money as was given originally for one of them : they have almost reduced face-painting to a mechanic art, and make pour-trait as they make pins; one forms the head, another the point. I dare say, the time will come, when there will be as many painters to finish a whole length figure, as there are now trades to equip a beau : the face-painter, the wig-painter, the cloaths-painter, the linen-painter, the stocking-painter, and the shoe-painter. For as money is the pursuit, and honor very little called into question, as mens merits are less the cause of their success, than the patronage of some great man, and future fame outweigh'd by pre-

sent money, in all opinions ; it is probable from what has already been put in practice by those who have gotten the greatest fortunes, that this liberal art will be reduced to as mechanical an operation, as making hobnails, that fortunes may be made with the utmost expedition.

As things are at present managed, it is no encouragement to be excellent in the art of painting : a false praise effectually carries any man into a run for five or six years ; they cry he is the best painter in England ; he has all the people of taste fitting to him : what exquisite drawing, what delicious colouring, what perfect likeness ! At the expiration of this term, he is no more heard of, than if he had never existed ; like a ghost that haunts a house, every one's conversation, and concern, till time cures the belief, and leaves it no longer a ghost. This is equally the event, whether he has, or has not merit ; the fame, and the run of business begin and die together : it is for this reason, that the painters of England are less solicitous about studying their profession, than finding a blear-eyed patron, who, with zeal for what he can neither see nor understand, may impose upon others, and swell him into high reputation.

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AN academy of painting established like that at Paris, where all the pictures of their masters are seen for a whole month, once every year in a public exhibition, would destroy these false methods of getting into reputation : pictures beheld together by those eyes which are not judges of them apart, would have a very different appearance ; the artist of real merit would not stand in need of a puffing patron to get him business, nor the unskilful painter have the power of imposing on the world, by the artifice of an impetuous and ill-judging protector ; till this is once accomplished it is in vain to expect works of merit, the love of fame will be lulled to sleep by the opium of money, and the heart at ease about the first which is satisfied with the second.

LET an academy and an exhibition take place, and, for the future, reputation and profit will be the same thing, and the same path conduct to both possessions ; the temple of fame will not stand at the end of an unfrequented bramble-grown path as it does at present, and some squint-eyed patron in attitude of admiration at some miserable production at the end of another,

along which the painters crowd as Don Quivedo has described his people in the vision of the loving fools.

If the late prince of Wales had lived, an establishment of this kind would probably have taken place in his reign; he was a lover of the imitative arts, and would have encouraged them; the present, who is a young prince of great expectation and promise, is not yet blown sufficiently to shew all that diversity and elegancy of tints, which is hoped from the appearance of the flower in the bud.

WHATEVER may be the event, an academy for painting is certainly worthy a royal institution and protection, if it be but to secure the trade of this nation, on which the revenue so much depends: an establishment of that nature has more influence on the commerce of a people, than perhaps is commonly imagined; and, tho' it never may produce one good painter, will bring many thousand pounds into the island.

How many trades are there whose merchandise takes its great value, from the taste in which

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they are executed ; toys of all kinds, and most sorts of furniture for elegant houses ; the form of a gold snuff-box shall sell it with an alloy of ten per cent. when sterlⁱng gold shall lie unasked for, because of the awkwardness of the make ; this the French are so sensible of, that they allow that alloy to be mixt with all toys in that metal : what beau minds the movement of a watch, if the case be elegantly designed ? the same runs thro' the whole of these things which depend on fancy, from the pattern of a sixpenny ribband to the dearest silk, tapestry, velvet, and carpets.

AN academy therefore, once established in painting, if it never produced any very excellent painters, would yet create excellent designers for the ornamental parts of all kinds of manufactories ; the enamelled boxes would vie with Martin's *papier maché*, and the Germans purchase their most valuable furniture from England, and not from France.

As great numbers from the cheapnes of the education could apply their children to it, every

had educated in this way, who was not adequate to great things, would be obliged to turn his hand to some lower part of the arts of sculpture and painting: he who could not equal Michael Angelo, or Raphael, might carve a chimney-piece, and paint a coach with much taste; those who could not rival Salvator Rosa, Claud Lorain, or Vernet, might yet paint landscapes on china and enamelled ware, and by export make these commodities the universal purchase of the globe; this will certainly be the consequence of an academy once established.

IT is also a demonstration, that without these helps it is impossible to carry the common capacity of men to its greatest excellence. A genius who has an imagination as vivid and extensive as can be supposed, who combines and disposes figures ever so elegantly in his head, may yet want the language of a painter, drawing and expression; tho' the first is the gift of heaven, the latter is the effect of study; and notwithstanding some men are born with greater aptitude to design than others, as some are with more facility of speaking than others, yet it must be

be the work of application to draw well, or form a style, the former of which is much more difficult than the latter; as the last may be made every moment's study in common conversation, the other requires a separate attention and practice: as in learning a language, those who begin late scarce ever attain a pure pronunciation; those little differences of sound and articulation which escape the speaker, are clearly distinguished by the hearer, and impart an inaccuracy and dissonance to their pronunciation; in like manner, those who begin to draw late in life are always imperfect in their designs, those little inexplicable differences which create the grace and beauty of a figure, are entirely lost in their works and imperceptible to themselves; the eye has formed its manner of seeing before they began their studies, and, like the organs of speech, or those of hearing, is neither capable of that conformation necessary to make or distinguish those minutenesses, which place one production so superior to another in taste and gracefulness.

THAT which determines a lad to be bred a painter in this country, is his father's seeing some of his scrawls on his books with a pen, or
on

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on the walls with a charcoal ; he is a genius in drawing instantly, and this decides his employment ; whereas, in fact, this talent is the least of a painter ; if he does not see nature as she is, and has not a fertile imagination, he never can be made an excellent artist ; loose imitations almost all can make ; he may be a dauber and nothing more, as is manifest from the thousands which have been condemned to this art unsuccessfully : it has already robbed the public of too many members, which would have been useful in other branches of trade, to make miserable pourtrait-painters, the most useless of all employments which belong to man.

IN the neighbouring country of Ireland, the gentlemen have appointed premiums, as incentives to excelling, for those young painters who shall produce the most approved pieces ; this is the best supply to the want of an academy, where premiums must always be instituted also : this may in time make painters of merit in Dublin ; indeed, many of the English would do well to go thither at present, if it were but to recover the love of their country, which yet finds protectors amongst the commons of

Ireland ;

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Ireland ; men who are not ashamed to prefer it to themselves. Whether it be fatality, inattention, or ignorance, which reigns over the understandings of this people of England, I cannot decide ; something however, of that kind seems to rule all their actions of a public nature.

I am,

Your most obedient.

L E T-

LETTER XXXIV.

*To the Reverend Father FILIPPO
BUONANNI, at Rome.*

Dear Sir,

THREE is nothing which is so often objected to the catholics, as that uncharitable tenet of giving all heretics to the devil ; believing that none of them can be saved, and keeping no faith with them.

THIS indeed is an imputation which favours very little of christianity, and was it carried into practice, and to influence our actions, would be extremely pernicious and truly detestable.

I HAVE observed, that churches, or sects, adopt certain articles in their belief, which are disavowed in their practice ; and men become much the same in their actions, tho' their tenets in some particulars may differ, if they are held by any at all. The church of England are predestinarians by their articles, and preach free-will; the

the dissenters allow free-will, and preach predestination. But let us see if the church of England, and dissenters, are quite free from this imputation of damning those who differ from them. The creed of St. Athanasius is the creed of the English church, which, after recounting the articles necessary to be believed, says, "this is the catholic faith ; which except a man faithfully believe, he cannot be saved."

WHAT is there in condemning people to eternal punishment in our religion, more criminal than in theirs ; it is true, we believe those articles as well as the church of England, they are therefore no condemnation of catholics, but they are of all other religious sects of christianity, who do not think as they do : thus, they are equally guilty of the crime they impute to us, and unjust in the taxation. I am convinced from the behaviour of those catholics who are natives of this kingdom, that their word and honor is as seldom violated, as those of a Presbyterian, or any other sectary, who condemns this tenet in our church with so much violence.

THE Spaniards, the most rigid of all catholics, even those men, in commerce have preserved a punctuality with the English during the time of war, in returning them the effects in their hands, or transacting their affairs, in a manner which will do honor to human kind ; yet, the English are considered as heretics by these people. Thus, acknowledging this tenet to be one of the Romish church, is it not one of the English also ? and the influence to ill-will is no greater with us than with them : in fact, as it is contradictory to all the practice of religion, so it never influences the mind of any christian. Methinks, this one article is less likely to dispose the mind of a human being, to put its dictates in practice, in opposition to all others by which we suppose ourselves bound to do good, than the natural selfishness of man let loose by the opinion that every man has a right to think for himself, and act in consequence of it, which is the standing tenet of the dissenters.

I FANSY a scale might be made of the pro-bity of all sects, who depart from the established religion of any nation, gradually lessening, as they

they are more distant from the tenets of the national church ; at least, something of that kind appears to me amongst the sectaries of England ; I know not what Scotland would produce, perhaps, the quite contrary, hypocrisy being the inseparable companion of that establishment.

THE transactions of catholics being as honest as those of any other church, it appears, that this tenet does not much influence their behaviour in life towards their fellow-creatures, and probably an eye that will look a little farther into things than the surface, will find that this affair of excluding people from salvation is the inseparable idea of all the sectaries, tho' not openly avowed : to what purpose, or for what pretence was it, that the Presbyterians separated from the church of England, but because they conceived that the established worship had something in it which is wrong in its modes and articles of belief, or, which is the same thing, that it does not lead to salvation ? now that which does not lead to salvation leads somewhere else, and thus, they believe that all other christians are not saved ; indeed they will not avow this openly, but if they do not, they lose all argument and

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plea for separation ; all other considerations below that of being in danger of not being saved, being infinitely too small for the making new sects, and dividing the sentiments of a nation in a matter so essentially necessary, as that of being held by one uniting principle in religion.

PERHAPS this belief of all religions being less likely to save the soul of man, than that which each follows, is inseparable, and must be so, from all true believers of what they profess. If our own is not beheld in that favourable light, above others, if all religions are alike in our opinion, we shall be actuated by none ; preference being absolutely necessary in all things, to put the mind of man into action, and make it influenced by any motive : thus this particular belief, and that in religion, seem to be secretly united for ever together, in the minds of all believers.

A philosopher then, who is not misled by the will - of - a - wisp of words, or dazzled by the aurora borealis of false pretensions, sees that at the bottom these terrible imputations against us, by the sectaries, are really found in their own principles

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principles of separation ; and in truth, the belief of not being obliged to keep faith with heretics, has influenced the morals of catholics, as little as that of being obliged by nothing, or taking the liberty of thinking for themselves amongst the dissenters ; a species of beings which has never been remarkable for lenity, when they had power, or charitable thoughts for those that differ from them.

FROM much observation and in justice to the English church, I own it has a generosity belonging to it, which has almost ruined itself by its indulgence to sectaries ; and perhaps a liberality of sentiment, to be found in no other ; greater than the feeble condition of human nature is able to bear and be well governed ; indulgence, in extremes, creates dissatisfaction in all things.

I am your most obedient servant.

LETTER XXXV.

*To the Reverend Father VINCENZO
SPINELLO at Rome.*

Dear Sir,

I have often told you, that this island teems with more characters, than are to be found in any nation upon earth, and probably as many as are upon the face of the globe. Every other nation has something which characterizes its people, and makes it visibly belong to one government; but in England the idea of liberty has reduced the minds of the inhabitants to a state of nature, as near as possible: this arises from the belief, that in religion as in government, a man is to think and act for himself; which has taken off all restraint.

INDEED, this is not the avow'd belief of all ranks of people: those of the established church allow, that the king has a right to decide and determine in matters relating to religion; that he has prerogatives and power, which are truly

his ; and yet the ministry of late years, who have been all Whigs in politics, and of the establish'd religion in matters of faith, if of any, (except one presbyterian or two, slipt into high places) have diminish'd the power of the one, and tacitly disavowed the authority of the other, tho' the government has not been changed by any law whatever.

THIS prevailing opinion in the two most essential considerations of life, has borne down all other minuter influences ; there is no uniform, establish'd behaviour amongst the people in this kingdom, as you see in other places : The very moment an Englishman becomes rich enough to think himself independent, his first pleasure is, to shew that he does not care a sixpence for any one, by his behaviour and conversation, and lets himself loose to the influence of his ruling whimsy : I speak now of all those, who rise to great fortunes of their own acquiring : by this means in a London coffee-house, a place for society and conversation, you see in their faces that these men are less sociable creatures, if they are silent, than in the inhabitants of Paris, as they walk the streets ; a stern negative spreading itself over the countenances of the first, and a

look of invitation on those of the latter : if they speak, it is apparently to please themselves ; the French, tho' with the same design, yet appearing to please others.

IT is in this isle an inviolable maxim, that every man of fortune has a right to spend his money as he pleases : by this it appears, that neither custom nor government influencing the behaviour of these people, there are few that diffuse their money as they ought, but each man's prevailing whim decides of him in all things.

FROM this principle it naturally happens that one is all horse-jockey, another fox-hunter ; this up to the ears in play, another eternally in taverns and brothels ; one rambling from place to place at an expence above his income ; this buys pictures, nick-nacks and vérité, till he has not a house to put them in, and that purchases a seat in parliament for seven years at the price of half his estate (the whole of which was not before that time large enough for his expences) at the expiration of which term, he finds himself disappointed in his expectations, and without an acre of land.

If Mr. Locke's opinion of madness and idiots are just, these men ought to come under one or other of these definitions. Madmen put wrong ideas together, and so make wrong propositions, but argue and reason right from them ; but idiots make very few propositions, and reason scarce at all : to which of these does the greatest number belong ?

METHINKS this definition of madness is extremely imperfect, because almost all Englishmen, and philosophers who differ from one another, must come under that denomination in each other's opinion ; thus Descartes, who would explain all the motions of the planets by tourbillons, reason'd very well from that proposition, tho' it was false, and yet I believe Sir Isaac Newton never imagined him a madman ; and Descartes, in like manner, if he had lived at the time of Sir Isaac, would not have conceived that great man a lunatic, tho' he had never been converted to his doctrines.

I HAVE often imagined, that the inside of the head of a man in his senses, and that of a

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madman, are not so totally different, as we are apt to imagine : if another person could see and write down all the ideas which pass in our brains in a week ; the resolutions, irresolutions, hopes, fears, castle-buildings, reasonings, &c. ; the person himself, from whom the picture was drawn, forgetting what had passed in his mind, would declare these were the reveries of a lunatic.

MADNESS then seems to consist in believing all those things to be realities, which the mind images to itself, and acting in consequence of it ; the latter part makes the essential difference. For, tho' a man should believe himself a king, and never behave in consequence of that imaginary character, he would not be deem'd a madman ; in like manner one, whose actions were directed with the air and manner of a sovereign, tho' he did not believe himself a king, would yet be consider'd as a man who had lost his reason. Thus, it is the behaviour which constitutes the real idea of madness, and the concealment of our thoughts the man of sense : in this nation however, the actions of men must be very extraordinary, before the denomination of lunacy can be imputed to them.

SOME

SOME time since here was a merchant, whose name was Spencer, who lived in a garret, without common necessaries; he valued himself much on living on a shilling a day, and possessing eight thousand pounds a year: this proceeding was not looked upon as madness in this country, and yet in Italy, it would have most inevitably been consider'd as direct lunacy, and have confined him to an hospital. On the other hand an anchorite, who had renounced oppulence and splendour to live in a cell, beneath some little hillock, upon that which his own hands can produce, crossing himself ten times a minute in devotion on his knees, before a crucifix, would be consider'd as a saint in Italy, and a madman in England; these different conclusions spring from the same cause. Riches are so much esteemed in this country, that all kinds of extravagancies in behaviour, which lead to the possessing that inestimable blessing, appear with some degree of reason; and paradise is consider'd in that light amongst the people of Italy, and totally forgotten in this.

THUS, what looks like madness in one nation, to the eyes of a stranger, may be received as reasonable by the inhabitants themselves : a widow in some parts of India thinks it highly reasonable to run into the funeral pile, which consumes her husband ; and in England into the arms of a new spouse as soon as she can.

AFTER this long dissertation, give me leave to describe a character of a man, which happened to die whilst I was on a journey, at a town in Devonshire. What I shall tell you, was related to me by gentlemen of undoubted sincerity, every one acquiescing in the truth of it ; the whole appear'd so singular at that time, that I could not avoid taking minutes of his life, which I shall herewith send you.

HIS name was Stucley, a gentleman of a very ancient family, and of an estate of a thousand pounds a year ; in his youth he was bred to the law, and during this time appeared to have more of that principle in his soul which the Newtonians call the *vis inertiae* in matter, than

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is to be found in almost any man ; when put into motion he was extremely apt to continue so, and being at rest he hated moving : by this disposition, when he was prevail'd on by his companions to pass an evening in gaiety, he never desired to change that manner of living, and would have persisted in it for ever, if he could have prevail'd on them to continue with him, being then as eccentric and as inclined to motion as a comet ; in like manner, when he had once become sedentary by two or three days tarrying at his chambers, he hated the thoughts of being put into action again, and was always difficultly brought abroad, like a heavy stone, which has lain some time in one place on the ground, and formed itself a bed, out of which it is not easily removed.

WHEN he left London, he retired into the country, filled with the project of perfecting the perpetual motion ; this naturally kept him much at home in pursuit of this study : and as no one in the town had resolution enough to reason with him on the affair, or was of import enough to make him change his design ; that habit of persisting in one way kept him at home entirely.

During

During the course of more than thirty years, he never came abroad but once, which was, when he was obliged to take the oath of allegiance to king George the first; this was the only time he changed his shirt, garments, or shaved himself, for the whole time of his retirement: he was a very little man, and at once the most nasty and cleanliest person alive; washing his hands twenty times a day, and neglecting every other part: during this confinement, he never had his bed made. After he had given over all hopes of success in the perpetual motion, he took pleasure in observing the works and policy of ants, and stock'd the whole town so plentifully with that insect, that the fruits in the gardens were devour'd by them.

DURING the reign of the immortal queen Anne, whenever the duke of Marlborough opened the trenches against any city in Flanders, he broke ground at the extremity of a floor in his house, made with lime and sand, according to the custom of that country, and made his approaches regularly with his pick-axe, gaining work after work, chalk'd out on the ground,
according

according to the intelligence in the gazette, he took the town in the middle of the floor at Bideford, the same day his grace was master of it in Flanders : thus every city cost him a new floor.

DURING the time of his staying within doors, he never sat on a chair, and when he chose to warm himself, he had made a pit before the fire, into which he leapt, and thus sat on the floor.

HE suffer'd no one to see him, but the heir of his estate, his brother and sister ; the first never but when he sent for him, and that very rarely ; the others sometimes once a year, and sometimes seldom, when he was cheerful, talkative, and a lover of the tittle-tattle of the town.

HIS family consisted of two servant maids, one of which slept in the house, the other not : notwithstanding this singularity and apparent avarice he was by no means a lover of money ; for, during this whole time, he had never received nor asked for any rent from many of his tenants, and those who brought him money, he would often

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often keep at an inn more than a week, pay all their expences, and send them back again without receiving a shilling.

HE lived well in his house, and frequently gave to the poor ; always eat from large joints of meat, and never saw any thing twice at his table ; and at Christmas he divided a certain sum of money amongst the necessitous of the town.

HE seem'd to be afraid of two things only ; one, being kill'd for his riches ; the other, being infected with a disease ; for which reason he would send his maid sometimes to borrow a half crown from his neighbours, to hint he was poor ; and always received the money which was paid him, in a basin of water, to prevent taking infection from those who paid him.

HE never kept his money under lock and key, but piled it up on the shelves, before the plates in his kitchin. In his chamber, into which no servant had entered during the time of his tarrying at home, he had two thousand guineas on the top of a low chest of drawers, cover'd with dust, and five hundred lying on the floor, where it lay five and twenty years ; this last sum a child had

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had thrown down which he was fond of playing with, by oversetting a table that stood upon one foot; the table continued in the same situation also: thro' this money he had made two paths, by kicking the pieces on one side, one of which led from the door to the window, the other from the window to the bed.

WHEN he quitted the Temple in London, he left an old portmanteau over the portal of the antichamber, where it had continued many years, during which time the chambers had passed thro' several hands; when at last, the gentleman who possessed them ordering his servant to pull it down, it broke by being rotten, and out fell four or five hundred pieces of gold, which were found to belong to him from the inclosed papers; this he had never examined after: It is generally supposed also, that he had put some thousands of pounds in the hands of a banker, or lent it to some tradesman in London, without taking any memorandum of it from the person; all which is lost to his heirs, as he would never say to whom he lent it, thro' fear perhaps lest he should hear it was lost, which some minds can bear to suspect tho' not to know positively: after

more

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more than thirty years living a recluse, he was at last found dead in his bed covered with lice. And thus ended the life of this whimsical being. The gentleman who gave me this account was a man of excellent understanding, and who accompanied him to the town-hall when he went to take the oath of allegiance; he assured me, that in all the questions he could propose on every subject he could think on, he did not shew the least tincture of madness; he rallied himself on the perpetual motion, laughed at the folly of confining himself in-doors, and said he believed he should now come abroad again like other men; he was always esteemed a person of good understanding before his shutting himself up: at the time of his death he was building a house, the walls of which were seven foot thick, probably his fears of being murdered increasing with his age (I think he was more than seventy) induced him to build this castle-like dwelling to defend him from the attacks of thieves. This gentleman then, if he was lunatic, which none of his friends ever supposed him, seems to be so in the manner I have before mentioned, by putting all the reveries and whimsies of the human brain into action,

and

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and being unchecked by all external influence; a man of this stamp with a turn to devotion, would have been canonized as a saint in Italy.

Thus, sir, I have sent you a very singular, and very true pourtrait, which I hope you will consider as natural philosophers do the extraordinary productions of human nature, where the viscera are transposed, or any deviation from the common way of her productions: for tho' I look upon one research or discovery of the universal principles of nature, beyond a thousand of its irregular productions; yet, I hope in complaisance to the reigning taste in this kingdom, you will receive this with as much distinction as a six-legged rabbit, a two-headed lamb, or a double-bodied chicken, would be, by what is at present called a Philosopher in England. I am,

Your most obedient.

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LETTER XXXVI.

To the Reverend Father FILIPPO
PAMPTA at Rome.

Dear Sir,

IS it a paradox to say, that folly and philosophy in many cases are very near a-kin ; and that what is despised as superstition and weakness in one nation, may be esteemed as reasonable and praise-worthy in another.

FASHION reigns in all the occupations of human nature, in philosophy, and religion, as well as in dress and diversions ; tilts and tournaments are no more in England, horse-races and fox-hunting supply that place : the mind must be engaged, tho' we change the pursuit, and tho' the objects of the year 1500 become totally neglected and despised, yet those in fashion in 1750, have neither more truth, nor more good sense belonging to them, than the former ; *alius et idem nascitur* is equally applicable to funs, men, and fashions.

WHEN religion was the reigning mode, reliks of saints were very acceptable to every one ;
a nail

a nail of the true cross, a finger of St. Peter, a bone of St. Benedict, were esteemed worthy the regard of every one, however exalted in life and riches, and preserved in shrines of gold and silver. Christians conceived that those who had been illustrious in piety, or propagating their faith, deserved esteem and reverence for the advantages they had bequeathed to mankind, and the examples which they had set before them.

IN this nation, that manner of thinking is at an end, because religion is no longer in fashion.

LET US however, see whether the folly is cured by the reformation, or whether the same humour is not broke out in some other shape. Are not the present Antiquarians of England as ridiculous to the full, as the christians of our country who pay great esteem to the relicks of saints? always remembering, that the meanest capacities are those which are subject to this attention in Italy, and these which call themselves the highest in this kingdom to the other.

AN Italian peasant believes, that the effluvia from the shrine of St. Anthony can cure him of a disease ; he hangs up a waxen leg as a votive offering of gratitude for a limb preserved ; and by this means feels the highest sensation of joy, which a human creature is capable of conceiving ; thus, this folly is not without its pleasure attending it.

A philosopher believes he possesses the very knife that dissected the heartless ox, at the sacrifice which Cæsar made before his being assassinat-ed ; this is a curiosity not to be esteemed suffi-ciently, it becomes the envy of every antiquarian, the eternal cause of sighing the most rare of all the rare things upon earth.

AN Italian catholic has the chalice which St. Jerom used in the communion of the Eucharist, and values it amazingly ; he would rather part with any thing, than that which was employed by the hands of that pious man.

W H I C H is the most absurd credulity ? He who imagines himself possessed of what has no proof belonging to it, or, he who believes that

this chalice will defend him from disease and injury?

THE objects of this faith are different indeed, but the ridicule in each is equally striking; is it not to the full as unworthy the dignity of that great *reasoner*, man, to give credit to a knife's being preserved since the time of that sacrifice, that it has fallen into his hands, and then value it for that reason? as it is to believe the chalice of St. Jerom has the power of preserving human nature from evil?

INDEED, the christian sacrifice is much out of fashion, and the pagan highly considered amongst antiquarians; one disgraced by the name superstition, the other exalted by that of philosophy, and *vértu*; Cæsar adored as a genius and general, and Christ reduced to a carpenter's son.

YET to every eye uninfluenced by prejudice, what comparison between the two, even considered as human beings? One brought death on his countrymen, and slavery on his native land; the latter died to save mankind, and left behind him a doctrine which contains all that is ne-

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cessary for the felicity of man ; it absolutely recalled mankind from that depreciating state of deifying the worst of mortals, and replaced it in the regions of virtue ; yet, the commentaries of Cæsar, which convey to us devastation and destruction, shall be read with delight ; whilst the evangelists who preach peace, purity of heart, and good-will towards all men, are reckoned a matter not worth the notice of a philosopher, unless, peradventure, he has some design to attempt proving that the accounts they contain are not true.

As an impartial and philosophic examiner, which is the most reasonable creature ? he who seeks comfort from the shrine of St. Francis ; or he who delighteth his soul with possessing Cleopatra's patch-box, or the earthen saucepan in which Diogenes stewed his cabbage ? The first rejoices in the possession, because he imagines there is some hidden virtue belonging to it ; the latter because it belonged to some singular person, and a thing which no man else has ; which, notwithstanding that thought, is the most trivial upon the face of the earth, all singular things being so in nature, because the most useless ; the common air, common earth, common wa-

ter, common fire, as they are the most universal, are also the most excellent of all things; these are objects too great for the enquiry of the present philosophers, as pursuits worthy of esteem are for the antiquarians.

THE man who would explain to us what customs made ancient nations happy, and shew us why they were so in consequence of it; who would investigate the sources of good government, and adopt the plan which will conduce most effectually to happiness; develope the faculties of man assign objects proper to each, and convince us that ancients and moderns are by nature inferior to the pride of the stoic, and justly analyzing the whole soul, shew its component parts as they are, would be received with much less glee amongst the antiquarians, than he who should read a long dissertation upon the shape of the Clepsydra, the Triclinia, and candlesticks of the ancient Romans; the discoverer of the last would be more considered as a man of genius, than he who invented the machine to draw water from the lowest mines by the powers of steam, or the ventilator which brings a public benefit to our species:

such is the present value of frivolous and trifling pursuits, and the neglect of useful and ingenious enquiries in London.

IF we penetrate to the heart of the devotee and the antiquarian, the adorer of relicks, and the adorer of *vértu*; we shall find, that the whole value of the lamp which lighted St. Augustin to his devotions in his cell, and that which illumined the cave of Demosthenes in his studies, arise from an over-pious belief that men of exemplary virtue communicate something of that nature to all they possess, and an over-weaning credulity that men of genius impart to all they use, a share of their intellectual possessions; this can only be the cause of their admiration, and is equally ridiculous in the devotee and antiquarian; the objects, without this previous knowledge to whom they belonged, imparting nothing which creates attention or surprize. The lanthorn with which Diogenes searched for an honest man at mid-day in the streets of Athens, being in no other sense a greater curiosity, than that of Tom Davis a watchman, which lights him in his rounds, in London past twelve at midnight.

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THUS then, when I see the people of pretended wisdom gaping with astonishment, and grasping with desire, the knives, door-hinges, basons and utensils dug from Herculaneum, because they are ancient; I cannot avoid laughing at the attention which these philosophers pay those trifles, and rank them with the devout adorers of the relicks of St. Anthony, St. Benedict, and St. Francis.

WHOMEVER has much observed human nature, must know it too well to behold the former or the latter with much surprize; it is the condition of feeble man to search relief from such objects, and select something for every part of the soul and propensity in human nature.

YET I own, I am much inclined to be merry, when I see a set of men, who would be extremely displeased to be counted otherwise than men of deep science, rejoicing in the possession of a scarce medal, a sacrificing patera, or lamp of antiquity, conceiving knowledge annexed to such pursuits, and honor in the keeping them; and yet despising the devotee who passes his breviary over St. Be-

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nedict's shrine to collect its efficacious effluvia, or paying homage to the tooth of an apostle ; is it more ridiculous to offer devotion to one, than to believe there is science in the other ? would not Democritus laugh at the man, who made the superb distinction of philosophy and folly between these propensities ; and Heraclitus weep, that men could pursue such objects, with a belief of real knowledge in one, and efficacious influence in the other ?

IF both are ridiculous, yet methinks, they are not equally so : the devotee, pursuing the dispositions implanted in man, is only weak like man ; the other, assuming the philosopher, and man of research, in pursuits equally absurd, is equally weak, and yet ten times more the object of ridicule, because he stigmatizes that with the appellation of folly in others, which he dignifies with philosophy in himself, and cannot discover that he and they differ in nothing but in words, devotion and vertu, the love of religion and the love of antiquity ; the passion is the same, and the objects equally meritorious, only fashion has given one the air of reason and truth, and religion out of fashion,

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the air of folly and falsehood, to the other. Alas! we are men alike thro' all, and the antiquarian of England as credulous, and as little philosophic, as the devotee of Rome: the impartial eye and sagacious head discover what surfaces conceal; that novelty, rarity, and fashion, delight and delude; yet the ocean of intellect is all the same, and contains the same materials, below; the prism of the human understanding divides the flood of light into its original compounding colours, the green, blue, or violet, may in their turns be the reigning colour in vogue; and the true philosopher perceives that an equal truth belongs to each, and their union constitutes that which gives life and visibility to all. I am,

*Your most obedient,
and most bumble servant.*

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LETTER XXXVII.

*To the Reverend Father BATISTA
GUARINI, at Rome.*

Dear Sir,

IT has been the observation of some travellers, that the refined policy of the Venetians has designedly created a contempt of their clergy, and a kind of plenary indulgence in the affairs of gallantry; in consequence of which the nuns frequently receive their lovers in their convents, and after having vow'd an eternal adieu to the delights of this world, pass their hours in the sweets of carnal love, and mere mortality.

I am not politician enough to decide, whether this be right according to the maxims of their government; nor do I know, that encouragement to vice, and the diminishing the power of restraining it by depreciating the esteem of the clergy, necessarily enter into the idea of an aristocracy. It seems to me however, that the ministers of this kingdom may possibly conceive it in that light, and their views be calculated to introduce the same kind of government hereafter in this island, which reigns

reigns in Venice at present; they may lessen the authority of the crown to that of the Doge, and buying the votes of that rabble of little boroughs in the kingdom, secure to themselves hereafter those who may unite to plunder and undo, then treat their master with contempt, and keep their own power superior: an understanding that would doubt this, after their intending to pass a law against clandestine marriage, in the manner it is designed to be enacted, must have a great inclination to scepticism indeed.

IT has been already said, that the Venetians, by tolerating the criminal intercourse of the sexes, and shewing no favourable attention to the clergy, must have imagined, that such behaviour is necessary to the supporting an aristocratic government, which is with them very despotic and tyrannic.

YOUTH must be indulged in venereal delights, the propensity which is most natural to it, to allure their attentions from the study of politics, and enervate their resolutions by that indulgence; and the clergy render'd almost contemptible, lest that power, which divines have over the minds of men, should create opposition

to

to the civil authority, and give the senators disturbance by preaching patriotism and virtue.

IF these are the reasons of the Venetian nobility, the ministerial men of this island, may probably have adopted the same sentiments for the same intent; at least there has lately been thoughts of passing a law in this nation, which may bid fair to have no better tendency.

IT is said that it will be enacted, that no marriage shall be valid without consent of guardians or parents, where either person is less than twenty-one years old.

THE penal parts to rest only on the clergyman, who performs the office; the male or female, who is above age to incur no penalty; and the young lady who shall be seduced, to have no restitution for her lost reputation and virtue.

THE more one considers the nature of this act, the more it appears impossible that any thing can be more effectually plann'd, to the effectuating the design of introducing an aristocratic or oligarchic power; it contains every thing necessary, combined in one law, for that intent:

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tent: if the abettors of it will still avow that their design had nothing of that kind conceal'd in it, how will they clear themselves from the imputation of the most short-sighted politicians, that ever pretended to give laws to a nation, will they, after so manifest a mistake, persist to preside in affairs of state and public welfare?

WHENEVER an order of men, equally criminal with another who has no greater right to immunites by law or privilege, is exempted from the punition, to which the former is subjected by the legislature, may it not be said, that it is either designed to shew the contempt which the ministers have entertained for one above the other, or some private sinister view exempts the latter, for reasons peculiar to themselves, and not tending to public good?

WHAT pretext can a man make use of, to amuse an inquisitive eye, and blind a just judge, who is about to subject the clergyman to penal laws for crimes, in every commission of which there must be always some one more criminal than him whom this law makes only culpable.

THIS

THIS is what is said to be the design; for example, Sir, if a young gentleman of age shall, when this law is past, prevail on a young lady, who loves him, to be married contrary to law, by subduing the virtue of a clergyman in necessity, by a sum of money immense in his eyes, to perform the matrimonial rite, and conquer the chaste resolutions of the virgin, by vows of eternal truth, and arguments which love will easily believe, and art easily suggest, that marriage is a sacred rite, over which no earthly potentates have the least authority; that therefore it is impious to pretend to it; yet, such is to be the lenity of this law, that this seducer is not to be punished.

WHO that has known the least of human hearts, can imagine, that the fairer sex in love will listen to this law, and act in consequence of it.

YET, a transaction of this kind, it is said, is to condemn the clergyman a felon to the plantations, and leave, amazing to human belief! the person who seduced the young lady and the clergyman, in full liberty to repeat the same crime

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crime ten thousand times, if he can find opportunities.

CAN therefore any law be devised, which can so effectually bring the clergy into disgrace, as being subjected to partial acts of parliament, and erase that lawful authority which they should have in all states, over the minds of men committed to their care: can the sense of Britons be so depraved to let it be past in England.

AT the same time, can there be any incitement to libidinous attempts, so strong, as thus reducing the young, innocent, and virtuous, to ruin by a law, which the enamour'd heart can never conceive to be right, in contradistinction to that which has always been deem'd sacred and inviolable till now, unless some immoral actions have given cause for a divorce:

INDEED, if this law should pass, there remains but one greater incentive to lust and debauchery, which is giving premiums to him who shall ruin most virgins; and this probably will take place in this kingdom, sooner than an encouragement to virtue, arts, or sciences:

For

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For instance, an authentic list of a certain number of deflower'd virgins of good families, may give to a young nobleman an ensigncy, lieutenancy, or captain's commission in the guards, and in like manner, commissions in the common marching regiments, to others of the gentry, according to their merits.

OTHER young men of less honourable parentage, sons of corrupted mayors, and perjured returning officers, may be provided for in the customs, excise, and other places, according to their deserts in this way ; and lastly, the common people may be remunerated by giving so much a maidenhead, to be paid by the churchwardens of parishes, as they do already for a badger, or a fox's head : this would complete the scheme. Pray tell me, if the promoters of this law can have virtue in view, and the promotion of public utility, whence does it arise, that when the person of age shall have contracted this marriage, and offended this law, he is not to be punish'd with death as in France ?

THIS precaution it is foreseen, may prevent this artifice of ruining virgins by a false marriage,

riage, the person who would then be strength'en'd in his powers of seduction, will be limited by the fear of punishment; and consequently the young men restrain'd from gallantry, and debauch, both of which must ever be indulged in a nation, that is to be undone: and then, as few of these offences in marriage, may be committed under so obstinate a check, the clergy could not be loaded with infamy: Thus two great reasons of enacting this law may be destroy'd by enacting this clause.

IF seducing young girls to their ruin, and their proving pregnant from this interview, is to be obligatory on the man to marry them, as it is in Holland; then will not the virtuous young gentlemen of this island receive a most unmerciful opposition to their humane dispositions of ruining maids, and the design of the law be entirely frustrated?

DOES it not evidently appear then, that this law, if it is past, will tend to lessen the moral influence and power of the clergy, and open new roads to gallantry, and debauching virgins; and is not this following the Venetians in their favourite maxims of aristocratical government?

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THIS however is not the whole, which seems intended by this law; minors being withheld from disposing of themselves, till of age, are actually in the hands of their parents or guardians till that hour; during which time, by coaxing, by threats, by promises, by sale, and ten thousand other methods, they may easily engage them to wed the persons they please to chuse for them; avarice or pride, the ruling passions of old age in this land, will oblige parents to wed their children to every vice, disease and deformity, to every thing disagreeable in soul and body, to obtain more riches, or procure titles.

THUS then, in future times, the great families uniting with the rich, will not the borough towns, which are already thoroughly corrupted, chuse the wealthiest candidates, or those who can give most money for them? by this means will the representatives in p——— be any longer those of the people? will not the nobility and commoners, who are sufficiently wealthy to place whom they please in that great charge, rule their behaviour, with the ease of a machine wound up to go as they chuse, and set to strike

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the hours right or wrong, at their direction? Hence may it not hereafter follow, that the power of money, in the possession of a few, shall influence all, and oppose that of the crown, by purchasing a p——t which may alike infringe the regal authority, and peoples liberties, in preference of their own power; a cry of hounds so nicely taught, that they will quit the prey in full chace, if the ministerial huntsman throws the pole before them; or hunt down a lamb with as much rage as a fox, if halloo'd by him to the pursuit.

THIS nothing can so soon effectuate as this law, which if it pass must inevitably produce a union of riches and honors, and at no very distant period prove the destruction of the crown's legal authority, and the peoples just liberties, and generate an aristocracy or oligarchy to be the directing power of this nation.

THEN tell me, do not you plainly perceive, this seems to be done with intent sooner or later to render the clergy of the established church open to contempt and infamy, from which the dissenting teachers are exempted by this very act, these having no power of performing the nuptial rite?

As the English clergy, excepting a few abandoned men, have ever been the friends of the true government, in supporting the king's rights, and peoples privileges, it becomes absolutely necessary to render these men contemptible in the eyes of all, before their doctrines can be totally disregarded ; which this law in time will most effectually produce. Thus the clergy may be rendered despised and infamous, the virgins of most beauty and best dispositions destined to the arms of violators, and seducers ; the legislative power given into the hands of riches, the regal authority, the peoples liberties and virtues annihilated, by one law against clandestine marriage.

Is it not evident then, that the Presbyterian plan of government which was in vain attempted by that infamous race of men, in the reign of Charles the first, by arts, arms, and assassination, is at present very near being effected in the reign of George the second, and the king and people losing those prerogatives and liberties which have cost them so much blood and treasure, so often and so well defended by the arms and eloquence

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of their ancestors, by the artifice of ministerial men, disguised in the shape of a law?

In this way will the English constitution one day expire, as it appears to my eyes, who behold objects with less partiality, than those natives who either oppose or defend the ministerial power. I am,

Yours, &c.

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LETTER XXXVIII.

To the Reverend Father BATISTA
GUIANI, at Rome.

Dear Sir,

IS it not true, that individuals may be very defective in one sense, and very perfect in another? the eye may scarce have accuracy enough to distinguish colours at a little distance, and yet the ear may be so perfect as to discover the succeeding notes in the dying vibration of one string, or expiring sound of one bell; whilst another person shall discover the least deviation from true drawing, or varying shade of the same colour, and not distinguish one air or tune from another: the same is equally true in the other senses of smelling, touching, and hearing.

THIS observation has led me to imagine, that the same degrees of excellence which are to be found in the senses of individuals, may characterise a whole nation in this respect.

IN

IN passing thro' Paris to this city, I could not avoid being greatly astonished at the pleasure with which the audience seemed to be delighted, with the singers on their stage; for that reason which above all others is the most disgusting in music, the being eternally out of tune.

NOT a singer in the opera ever performs an air without that error, and yet, the whole audience does not appear the least sensible of it: an Italian porter would have raved at such sounds, and left the theatre instantly, half mad, unless the singer had quitted the stage.

THIS naturally made me suggest, that this nation in general is defective in hearing; the organs of that sense, in a French native, are not made with sufficient delicacy, to distinguish between being in tune, and not in tune; whereas, those of an Italian peasant are extremely accurate in this sense.

NOTWITHSTANDING this, the deficiency which is so notorious in this part of the organi-

zation of a Frenchman, is amply atoned for, by the great perfection of the sense of seeing.

IN all attitudes of the human figure, whether in dancing, walking, or any other kind of polite action, nothing is more just, graceful, and becoming, than what is to be found in France, not only in the superior ranks, but even the lower have a great degree of that becoming action.

THE eyes of this people are so extremely subtle and distinguishing, that the smallest improper action in a player, the least distorted or ungraceful motion in a dancer's limbs is immediately perceived ; the eye of that person, whose ear cannot distinguish between an instrument in tune and not, discerns the least ungraceful movement of the body, and receives much pain from it.

HENCE it follows, that the musicians of Paris are very often deficient in tuning their instruments, and their dancers the most graceful and just in all the attitudes of bodily motion.

THIS superior accuracy of sense in the eye does not terminate in the dancer, it goes on in

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the painter and statuary, in the drawings, decorations and ornaments of all kinds of toys and furniture ; and I believe, it is no violation of truth, to say, that the French academy of painting and sculpture furnishes the best masters of these kinds in Europe at present : this you must confess is no small concession from the lips of an Italian, where these arts have flourished and reigned in all the zenith of perfection.

THE English, with whom I have long resided, resemble our natives in the delicacy of hearing, more than either the Italians or French in that of eye-sight.

THEIR very ballad-singers in the streets are in tune, and are really for that reason alone, without considering the taste of their common airs, a more agreeable entertainment, than all the voices of the French opera.

THE ear of a Briton has a great degree of perfection, sensibility, and taste of the powers of music ; it distinguishes instantly between the pleasures which are communicated by instruments

in

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in tune, and those which are not; and tho' many of the hearers know not the reafon, yet, their displeasure is visible in their faces, whenever that accident happens in a piece of music, which has before given them delight.

HOWEVER excellent this sense of hearing may be in the natives of this island, even in the descendants of the original inhabitants, as I remarked in my journey into Wales; it is manifest that the accuracy of the visual discernment is not to be compared with that of the French; neither men or women present themselves with that grace, which is spread over all the behaviour of both sexes in Paris; they neither dance or move with such ease and dignity; one degenerates into flippant, and the other swells into burlesque; for this reason this island has not bred fine dancers, either among men or women.

THAT excellence depends on the perfection of the eye-sight, and is totally directed by that sense; it may be conceived that motions in dancing, as they are accommodated to music, the dancer ought to be a judge of that also, and have a nice

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a nice ear ; this indeed, is true, but then it depends on the knowing the time of the composition, and not discerning the instrument's being in tune ; a musician may be a most excellent timist, and the hearer a good judge of that part, tho' the first plays the whole air out of tune, and the dancer knows nothing of the difference.

To this defect of visual powers may it not be assigned, that England has not yet produced a good painter, no one amongst them having been remarkable (I mean a native) for either drawing or colouring well ?

EVEN the sole man of great invention amongst the painters, has been somewhat deficient in drawing and colouring : tho' his fancy has been luxuriant and just, yet the other parts, which depend on the perfection of the sense of seeing, have been unequal to that of the imagination.

THESE natural and original defects may probably prevent the English from ever having excellent painters amongst the natives, and the French from producing exquisite musicians.

To

To what other cause can it be ascribed, that tho' the same mental powers have shewn themselves in their writings of fancy, which are necessary to make excellent painters and musicians, that those artists are yet unproduced amongst the natives of this isle and that kingdom? I am,

Your most obedient servant.

John Evelyn
London, 1690.

John Evelyn

John Evelyn
London, 1690.

LET-

John Evelyn
London, 1690.

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LETTER XXXIX.

To the Reverend Father CURTIO
MARINELLI at Rome.

Dear Sir,

IT is not in these maxims alone which I last sent you, that the ministerial part of this kingdom imitates the Venetian policy ; besides the toleration, not to say the encouragement given to gallantry, and contemning the clergy, there is yet one other scandal belonging to that state, which is publicly encouraged in this.

THIS is the countenancing that poisonous and pernicious race of informers, a set of men justly detested by all preceding nations ; beings which are engendered from the rottenness of a peoples morals, and a minister's nefarious schemes, like monsters in the mud of Nilus, or snakes in dung and putrefaction.

INDEED, every one is too sensible that such hyæna-beings have ever existed, and been employed in all kingdoms, particularly towards their decline ; but that they should be publicly known,
and

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and then openly and honourably remunerated, is an instance unexemplified in any virtuous nation ancient or modern.

INDEED, in London there are no heads of wood as at Venice, into which informations may be conveyed, excepting those of the administration, and these are of that wood out of which a statuary would be egregiously puzzled to make a Mercury.

THERE are some instances, when information becomes a virtue; the slave that overheard the designs of the sons of the elder Brutus, to subvert the government and restore the Tarquins to Rome; the discoverers of the Catalinian conspiracy; each deserved public thanks, and honourable remuneration: the importance of the discovery erased the blackness of the heart, which generally attends such degenerate beings; a virtuous man even might have done this.

BUT in trivial affairs, such as the inadvertent and unbecoming expressions of three intoxicated boys, where no danger could attend the indis-

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indiscretion, in a place where they had not the least interest, which the informer must perfectly know, is it not amazing he should find honourable encouragement for such baseness?

ADDED to this, the very situation he was in, the meanness of his birth, the distress of his circumstances, his known character and the public contempt for it, should have lessened the weight of his information, tho' it had excused in some measure his daring to do it.

YET, such is the reception he has met with at the M——r's hands, that it is positively asserted, he is to receive some considerable dignity in the church for his information; so honourable is the name and occupation of an informer become in this island, that henceforth it probably will advance the basest born to the rank of possessing what is worthy of the acceptance of nobility; it is even rumoured, that a noble earl's son, and this most pernicious of all beings to society, are to receive the same honors on the same day.

THIS

THIS I cannot believe to be true: will any minister be so weak and unmannerly, to throw so flagrant a contempt on the noble person who is destined to this honor, to place on the same rank with him a prostituted informer? Can it be conceived that any descendant of a noble family can bear such an insult on that respect he was born to, and is due to him; or, that those who have already received that dignity will sit on the same seat with infamy, and suffer it to tarnish the honors of their office, by the pestilential effluvia which escape from it:

IS it to be imagined, that a M——r will disgrace the character of a divine, and efface the influence which a teacher and instructor of morality and religion ought to have over the minds of men, by thus dignifying ecclesiastically the most infamous of all characters? will he bring a disgrace on the religion of Christ, by exalting the Iscariot of his apostles, and annihilate the effects of its doctrines, by rewarding the actions of those men which it detests.

IF this should be done, henceforth will the Britons pretend, that the church in England is

no refuge for those who deserve ignominious punishment, and condemning the Italians, assert that it offers no sanctuary for villains.

YET, believe me, sir, there are those who are positive in asserting that this creature will be publicly honoured, and assign this reason for it :

NOTHING, say they, is so much to be dreaded by the administration, as a total extirpation of Jacobitism ; if there remain no symptoms of attachment to the Stuart family, in England, what will the Whigs have to offer to their master, when he would pursue what seems right to him, and fatal to themselves ? or, how amuse the people, when they are inclined to transact something pernicious to the peoples welfare, with dangerous designs from the chevalier de St. George at Roine, whose interest the last rebellion has proved not to be worth six-pence in England.

A discovery of boys speaking treason, is a very acceptable service to those who are determined to dupe the ——, and deceive the people ; it is instantly heightened into something of the most criminal nature, spreading like a pestilence, and sounded in the royal ear as if all

England (except those who have the honor to approach his person) were his enemies and in arms against him ; than which, nothing is less true.

A rebellious song from a drunken peasant is the delight of a Whig ; and he that informs shall find his reward.

SHOULD the waves of Jacobitism be entirely hushed, and no little murmuring remain upon the shore, the eyes of all England would be turned on the ministry ; the people would soon be convinced how necessary it is to change the administration, and the —— himself cured of the groundless fear of losing his — by the contrivances of Jacobites (of which there is no danger) perceive, that his just prerogative and authority were secretly undermining by the Whigs ; and thus, the Tories might again find favour in his eyes, the only persons whose principles at present can sustain alike the king's just power, and the peoples lawful rights.

HENCE you see a little treason is acceptable to the ministry of England ; it is the buttress of their cause, it keeps them from falling into contempt

tempt and ruin, and therefore all intelligence of that nature is most acceptably received.

THE public news-papers, favoured by the administration, teem with songs and healths filled with treason, reported to be sung and drank in the distant cities of England, whilst affidavits to the contrary are coming daily from the same places ; thus, the Whigs are labouring by all possible means to keep Jacobitism alive, and the Tories to extinguish it ; for certain it is, that no future king, who entertains no terror from Jacobites, will continue the administration in the hands of Whigs, who has the least penetration into the consequences of what has, and always must follow the principles on which they proceed ; if he should, he may as well change places with the waxen figure of king William in Westminster abbey, and be gazed at by boys for halfpence, and that figure removed to St. James's to reign, and be drawn to the —————— in the old state-coach four or five times a year for an airing, to prevent both machines from growing mouldy.

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THEY tell me too, that the disgrace of the clergy is another object which the great have in view; and that this is most effectually obtained by filling it with ignominious members. I am,

Your most obedient servant,

LET:

LETTER XL.

*To the Reverend Father VINCENZO
SPINELLO at Rome.*

Dear Sir,

NOTHING is so frequently met with as discontent, in the manners and expressions of the English people, and nothing so uncommon as that disposition amongst the French ; a Briton growls at his situation in life all day long, and a Frenchman appears pleased with his ; and yet, the former extols the mode of his government beyond all others in Europe, and affirms, that England is the only land of liberty and happiness : this, as paradoxical as it seems to be, is not owing (as the inhabitants imagine) to the easterly winds, fogs or rains, which are in this island more frequent than in some other parts of the world.

THE mind takes little tincture from winds or weather ; whatever dispositions prevail, the

causes are to be found in the mind alone, and in mental nature.

LETTER

IF we examine the waywardness of an Englishman, the little inclination he has to follow any opinion but his own, whether conceived to be right, or preferred because he would have it so; we shall find something of that kind in him not to be found in a Frenchman.

THE same cause is the source of discontent as well as waywardness, and takes its rise from the nature of the English government, as it is at present conducted, not as originally constituted.

A CHILD born to a great estate, the only son of a great family, never feels the least curb to his inclinations; he is indulged in every thing reasonable and unreasonable, and this naturally brings discontent on the mind, a wayward disposition that having been soothed by the possession of every folly, at last, has nothing to desire and possess which has not been already granted: it becomes by that means the most peevish, disquiet, and displeased creature upon earth, eternally dissipated and perplexed.

HUMAN

HUMAN nature cannot support universal indulgence and be happy ; the soul unchecked will no more bear happiness, than trees unpruned good fruit ; it runs wild, straggles into long un-bearing branches and leaves, and becomes sterile. Without restraint from many things, it is the nature of man to enjoy nothing ; we know not the good of what we have, but by being denied in a great measure what we wish. Something to pursue, yet unpossessed, is necessary to keep the mind sweet and wholesome, it will grow putrid like large waters without motion.

THUS, in gentlemen educated from their youth, in a manner which teaches the good of things enjoyed, by the being dispossessed of others, the desire of conforming to the will of their superiors, and obtaining these prohibited pleasures, models their minds and gives them that ease and happiness, which is to be found only in those who have been truly educated.

To apply this to a whole people, the same indulgence when we speak of nations, is to be found amongst the English ; that is, in the hu-

moured heir of a large estate amongst individuals; they have been long spoiled by the indulgence of ministers, who knowing that to govern wrong and securely, is obtainable only by that licence, every criminal indulgence is nursed, and there remains but one punishable sin, which is, that of opposing the minister. In this people, no decorum binds, no laws have restraint, it is the avowed maxim that every man has a right to think for himself; whereas, no person is so little to be trusted to any conduct, as a man in general to himself. Religion is here just what every man conceives it to be, it is predestination, free-will, or folly, methodism, quakerism, presbyterianism, moravianism, anythingism, nothingism, and ten thousand other enthusiastic vagaries.

Thus, in this case as in that of children, indulgence has taken off the joy of what they possess, and a Briton, compared with other nations, is as wayward and unhappy as a child, that has never been restrained, is amongst those who have been differently educated; from the same source both take their rise.

HUMAN nature is as weak at fifty, as at fifteen ; objects and pursuits are changed indeed, yet, without more truth in the latter than the first ; and what is called wisdom is no other in general, than doing what custom has made more becoming a certain age : it has no difference in the essential parts of things, and that discretion which we so much applaud in seventy years, is in general nothing else than being tired with told follies, and not having resolution, or having too much indifference, to pursue new. The English being unrestrained soon grow weary of all things ; that *tedium vitæ*, for which sensation they have no word, is the only thing which is left them at forty ; how charming is a day's rest to a labouring man who feels it but rarely ? how indifferent is that care to those who never labour ? they have possessed and enjoyed all, and there is nothing to wish, unless it be that of wishing great part of their lives unpast.

THIS, methinks, will explain the English disposition, and the contrary will develope that of the French.

To be happy, we must neither be indulged too much, nor restrained too violently ; the mind of man cannot be truly at ease in either situation ; in the first it runs rapidly down like a clock without a pendulum, to steady and direct its motions ; in the other, it is so clogged with parts, that no weight or spring can move it.

The French seem to have this happy medium ; their government, tho' called despotic by those who understand it not, has just that kind of liberty which human nature in opulent societies is able to bear ; indulged in all that can reasonably make the happiness of a nation, the monarch's will enforcing no more than what the laws of England want to put them in motion, and providing expedients for those momentary restraints, which it is difficult to provide in a mixt government, and yet which all governments want.

THE inhabitants of France being restrained from doing ill by laws and power, the mind does not contract that licentious habit of discontent, which the manners of England impart by an universal indulgence ; it feels its state by being

ing withheld by law, and education, with freedom sufficient to taste freedom, and not sated with draughts of luscious licentiousness, which intoxicate, and efface the relish of all happiness.

This seems to me to be the cause of the difference between the English and the French; and neither winds or rains, degrees of climates, diet or drink, has made the different dispositions of the two nations.

The English, not free but licentious, are discontented in all things, and strangers to the joys of true social liberty.

The French, more controuled by constitution, and free in social life, taste the true sweets of liberty, which are to be found in living together.

With a native of the first, we are uncertain of his disposition for two hours together; too proud to indulge any one's inclinations but his own, he becomes as unsocial as an owl, as omnious, displeasing, and to be avoided.

With the other, you are sure of his temper; he is too polite to be changing momentarily like the

the colours of a camelion, or the feathers of a pigeon's neck with every motion ; he never fails to please himself by pleasing you ; and yet the English are called steady, and the French a fickle nation, the contrary of which is the truth. The superiority of the French to the English government, appeared once so striking to a Scotch member of parliament, that it produced the following story.

IT seems there had been a gentleman of that nation in parliament for some time, during the reign of Sir Robert Walpole, who had constantly given his vote with him, and yet never asked him any favour ; this, considering his country, appeared to the minister's eyes a more strange phænomenon, than ice in the dog-days ; he could by no means reconcile it to himself, he put together in his mind Scotland, this man, and asking no favour, and could not possibly bring any solution of this singular appearance.

DISTRUSTING therefore his being of that country, he acquainted a friend of his with this gentleman's behaviour, and desired him to bring him to dine at his house ; where being come, Sir

Robert

Robert thanked him for his friendship, and then asking to what reason it was owing;

THE Scotch gentleman replied, Sir, I have lived long in France, and from thence am convinced it is the best government in the world; and in troth as I see you are advancing with all your powers, to bring about a good work of the like kind in England, I am determined my voice shall not be wanting to so laudable an undertaking.

SIR Robert smiled, and there ended the conversation. I am,

Your most obedient.

LETTER XLI.

To the Reverend Father LORENZO

FRANCIOSINI at Rome.

Dear Sir,

MAY it not be said, that the ruling spirit of a nation is more or less visible, in the actions of all sorts of that people which dwells in it, from the common labourer and artizan, to the first nobleman in the nation? amidst the lower class it is to be found as conspicuous as amongst the highest, and the rags and fat living of the workmen of England, speak the idea of liberty, as much as the disregard and inattention which is to be found amongst the inhabitants of quality and riches.

THE ruling whimsy of the lowest people of England, is to be what they call free, and to be careleſs of offending any man. To lose, in drunkenness, all distinction between birth and obscurity, nobility and baseness, understanding and ignorance, to affront superiors and defy the laws,

make

make what are called the essential requisites of liberty by these good people of England.

To support this glowing spirit, as it ought, and keep the heart warmed with its own magnanimity, nothing is so truly effectual as a large quantity of inebriating liquor ; in consequence of this, all decoration is neglected, and in this light the shattered coat is to be considered only as an old ensign, which has been much torn and suffered in the defence of liberty.

THEIR daily labour is licentiously swallowed down their throat ; liberty is the word ; and the artist's hands are only employed to find him liquor and insolence. This is the ruling passion of an English common man, spirituous liquors increase his ideal freedom, and flatter his sensation of greatness, 'till he becomes as great as a lord ; liberty plucks justice by the nose. "The baby beats the "nurse, and quite athwart goes all decorum."

SHAKESPEARE.

OWING to this it is, perhaps, that the Indians of America are all great lovers of spirituous liquors ; it exalts the favourite notions of their own

own prowess, and every warrior becomes a Hercules by the influence of that inflaming liquor.

To shew you what extravagant and unjust ideas the people of England have annexed to the word Liberty, give me leave to tell you what I saw in the pit of the play-house.

IT happened that the king, and some others of the royal family, were at the comedy that evening; when, according to custom, the company took off their hats; one however, near me, amongst others, kept his on his head; when taking the liberty to speak to him, and asking if he paid no respect to the appearance of his king? he, knowing by my voice that I was a stranger, replied, "That, thank God, they were "a free people, and he would not take off his "hat to any king alive."

DON'T imagine this man was attached to the Stuart interest, it proceeded only from pure caprice or ill manners, which in ten thousand different shapes is dignified in this land with the celestial name of Liberty. During an election of members for Westminster, the popular excla-

mation

mation was, Liberty, Liberty ! and no French strollers! as if a troupe of comedians of that nation could destroy the liberties of England.

IN Naples the contrary of this disposition prevails ; there you shall see a smith or common artisan stand at his door with a pair of crimson-velvet breeches decorated with gold lace, and a laced waistcoat ; liberty is a sound not known in their country ; therefore the most favourite idea is to look like a gentleman, which notion flatters him into the expence of a laced suit and velvet, and that again into his being a gentleman.

POMP is so much the seducing notion of the Neapolitan, that if he cannot hire a boy to walk after his wife to church, he will put on his sword and follow her himself to give her an air of grandeur. An Englishman would rob on the highway, or sell himself a slave, with as much good will, as follow his wife to church in that manner.

As to matters of the belly, the Neapolitan is easily contented ; give him only his water-melon with ice, and he may fare as you please in other respects of diet.

THE peasants wives of that country go to market in a cloth-of-gold jacket, and a scarlet petticoat double laced with gold ; the ass which brings her and her wares is also charged with the precious load of her instrument of music, with this she amuses herself during her time of staying at market.

THUS you see freedom creates the love of strong liquors, and arbitrary power sobriety ; one loves to warm himself into insolence and contempt of authority, two things which he calls liberty, because he may do it uncontrouled ; and the other is afraid of being intoxicated, lest his lips should utter some disrespectful or indecent expression, and he should suffer for it.

IT may, I think, be fairly collected from the ancients, that the old Italians were no enemies to wine, but indulged their glass whilst freedom lasted amongst them ; which custom they would have preserved to this hour, if the fear of being betrayed by intemperance to inadvertent expressions had not begotten the present reigning mode of snow-water and fine cloaths.

THE Sabine and Falernian wine, the delights of Horace and Mæcenas, had never been neglected and unknown had Rome continued free; which is another reason for burning his Holiness in this island, and to an English idea of liberty a calamity not easily to be passed over with all their philosophy.

FROM what I have said you may imagine, that this disposition to wine creates no unfrequent insolence in the streets of London; and yet, strange to tell in this kingdom, this intemperance has an effect not so mischievous as one would expect, if we consider it in a political light. Adieu.

I am your most obedient servant.

LETTER XLII.

*To the Reverend Father FILIPPO
BONINI, at Rome.*

Dear Sir,

IT is a common observation, that too much zeal to serve frequently degenerates into meanness, and displeases a generous heart more than a becoming attention paid to yourself and to him you would oblige ; the excess of complaisance destroys the whole effect of it, and very often entirely disappoints the expectations of him that pays it : it is dangerous to give too much of any thing, lest by the frequency of it the minds of the receivers become accustomed to that manner of treatment, and slight the giver, who rather seems to be profuse in his donations than generous in his spirit ; yet would they entirely desert him if he should be remiss in the usual customs, which he has so long continued. Such is the nature of man in general.

IT is not in behaviour of common life alone that this excess of giving may destroy the effect of it. The full enjoyment of every object, the most desired by the inhabitants of this world from the cradle to the grave, makes the possessor rather unhappy, by having never tasted the difference which attends the want of them, than blessed with their possession. This very frequently creates inattention in nations, as well as in private men; and often dupes the minister to the artifices of other kingdoms, as it does the individual to the schemes of those about him.

NOTHING is so common in this kingdom, as to see a young gentleman born to wealth and every thing necessary for happiness, who has scarce tasted disappointment in his pleasures during youth, to become tired and inattentive, and without ever being profuse or even generous, his estate moulders into ruin by the corroding power of those sycophants who surround him; and this entirely owing to inattention and neglect of examining his affairs.

SOMETHING like this seems to be the disposition of the English ministry ; they have suffered the kingdom to crumble into dust ; and, mortgaging one revenue after another thro' carelessness of remedying it in times of peace, it at present can scarce produce income sufficient for the necessary supplies and occurrences of the year, and is become disabled from opposing its enemies in time of war.

THE country gentleman, who in this situation is neighbour to another who is not, is sure to have his lands invaded by the latter ; he kills the game which the other breeds, and preserves his own. The negligence of one increases the insolence of the other : they each know one another's circumstances, and suffering on one side is the natural consequence of the needy and negligent, as presumption is of him who is at ease and in full riches.

METHINKS the English are in the situation of the inattentive and needy man, and the French in that of the active and wealthy ; and the same effects follow, in consequence of this behaviour,

in the two nations, which are consequent in those of the individuals.

OWING to this it seems to be, that in the Eastern and Western colonies the French attack the subjects of this country, and treat them with a slight which could never have proceeded but from a thorough knowledge of the situation of the supplies of this nation, and an absolute contempt for the minister which directs them. They know perfectly that at present this people can but badly sustain the expence of a war, and that the minister understands little how to direct a kingdom in that circumstance: they are convinced by experience of his pusillanimity, and judging of the powers of a nation not by the money which it can raise alone, but by the wisdom of those who must direct its fleets and armies, proceed in consequence of that knowledge, and constantly attain some advantage in peace by attempting something like war.

THE French know that this minister will and must bear much before an open rupture can be declared by him; and, making the proper use of human knowledge, creep insensibly on the

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possessions which the English subjects have settled in America. 'Tis probable they will not cease till they come to the sea shore, their pursuit is one settled and uniform plan which is more or less followed in war and peace. The English after a treaty set their hearts at ease, and their neighbours are for ever active.

IT has been commonly said by the English during the last War, that tho' the French conquered on the continent, that they reaped no advantage by it.

THIS seems, in my opinion, to be a very great mistake: is not lessening the powers of England, by running it thirty millions more in debt, a very considerable advantage? a greater one than if it had bankrupted the nation; this load settles upon their backs, which, as a kingdom, is as much as it can well bear. And tho' the rich individuals don't appear to feel in their private fortunes the ill effects of this debt which has loaded them so insensibly, yet those who see things with most perspicuity and impartiality, know the perilous state this island is in.

HAD

HAD the war been continued till the funds had been all destroyed, individuals would then have complained more grievously than they do at present; the loss of some millions revenue would have been severely felt by the inhabitants whose effects lay in those funds; but the whole nation, having thrown off that load, would have recovered its strength, like a lion sick at the time of changing his coat, and come abroad more terrible when it was over, or a serpent in the desert of Lybia, more vigorous after the shedding its old skin.

THIS nation disengumbered of its debts, would be a much more potent enemy than it can be at present to the French nation; the natural revenues which it produces now in peace, would then afford millions to oppose them, and what at present pays the interest of their debts, would supply fleets, armies, and money to sustain their colonies, and the people then be no more taxed in war than now in times of peace.

METHINKS then, the Gallic nation has obtained no inconsiderable advantage by the last war,

war, even something more than if their conquests had been greater ; it has reduced England almost to a dilemma that has bound her hands. The minister dares not go to war, because of the difficulty of finding supplies, and there appears no great inclination to pay the national debts.

THE Dutch with all the barrier towns in Flanders dismantled, will scarce shew more readiness now, than in the last war, to become heartily the British allies, when nothing prevents their towns from being attacked on the first declaration of war, and an irreconcilable anger between the king of Prussia, and the empress of Germany, on account of Silesia is another advantage to France.

IT seems to me, therefore, that the French were never in so promising a way to be a very great nation, as at present ; nor England ever so likely to be less : the first encourage arts, sciences and commerce, and having reduced the English to the state they wish, as well as the Dutch, having banished from their own imaginations that vision of universal empire, they now seem to be in the pursuit of that which must terminate in the aggrandizing their kingdom,

dom, beyond that share which it ought to have in Europe.

WHILST in England, there is a dronish, lethargic disease, that has crept upon the souls of men in power, as if they had all drank opium, or that the natural consequence of working much in the raising money, had produced a paralytic state in their faculties, as it does on the limbs of those who are engaged in digging it in the mines.

CERTAIN it is, that no nation has at present less reason to be content with itself, than England; deficient in the knowledge of the nature of man, and consequently in the art of governing, resting all its powers and efforts on the influence of money, till it has almost exhausted that resource, not considering that gold is inanimate matter, and tho' when put in motion it has great effect, yet that the spirit which directs it, only imparts the advantage which ought to be expected from it.

IT may bribe the people of this nation to be at ease, with respect to what shall befall them; it

it may purchase individuals of another to coincide in their schemes; but this is a temporary expedient which only prolongs ruin, comes a Machault in France, whose hands are yet undefiled with plundering his country, and his heart unstained with venal or selfish ideas, and the influence of English gold is as ineffectual as rain to dissolve adamant.

THE probity and perspicuity of that man is a greater cause of fear to this nation, than all the French fleets and armies; what cannot be effected by the union of those powers joined with resolution, and what is not to be apprehended from the short-sightedness of a nation, which leaves itself undefended against its only natural enemy, its colonies unprotected from the same people, its commerce unencouraged, arts and sciences unprotected, one universal anarchy through neglect of police and religion, with corruption and perjury reigning over all the hearts of the lower class of people? such is the present state of this once illustrious isle.

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It gives me pain when I behold this, and astonishment at the inattention which the natives pay to their perilous situation ; I own I love them for their ancient virtues, and wish some favourable hour may reinstate them in their former lustre, alas ! I fear. I am,

Your most obedient.

LET-

LETTER XLIII.

*To the Reverend Father FRANCESCO
BERTINI at Rome.*

Dear Sir,

THIS kingdom seems to me to be a living lesson of what we read in the histories of ancient Rome ; we see here what we find written in our historians ; and the constitutions resembling one another in some respects, the analogy is more striking, than it can be in countries whose form of government differs more from the republican, than this does from the Roman. I have frequently imagined, that in governments which differ in their establishments, there should not only be laws peculiar to each, relating to property ; but some even which should restrain the accumulation of wealth beyond a certain degree : will the republican and mixt bear excessive riches, tho' perhaps they may be indulged to any excess in a monarchic or absolute state ?

WHAT I would be understood to say, is this, that a despotic state can bear to possess more riches without hurting its welfare, than a republic.

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lic or mixt government; it appears to me, this has the glimmering of truth, pray tell me what you think, when you have heard my opinion.

LET us then suppose, and as it really is originally constituted in this kingdom, that the king has his powers limited in some instances, and the people in others; that the executive is lodged in the hands of the first, and the legislative in the hands of the latter, and that the people have a right of choosing great part of this legislative body, for their representatives in the assembly of their nation.

THIS latter makes the republican part of the English constitution, all which should be chosen by their compatriots, from that natural ascendancy which good sense and virtue have over the minds of men; these are, in a nation where nature has not been totally defaced, the qualities which create that original authority which one man has over the minds and dispositions of many; this superiority they would have continued to exert, had not the introduction of too much wealth into private hands, destroyed their effect; it has placed

placed the private good of every individual in opposition to that of the general, and the thief with money has more authority than Epaminondas, was he an Englishman, would have without it.

THIS acquired power of riches, has totally supplanted all the influence of human excellencies over the minds of men; and Cataline with gold would be preferred to Fabricius without it, in nine of every ten boroughs in the island.

MONEY then having this influence on the human heart, counter-acts that weight which superior understanding, superior virtue, and superior abilities of all kinds, ought, according to the true fabric of nature, to possess in the nation where they are found.

THESE original powers of man were first implanted in a few, by the author of all, for the good of all who were of the same tribe or nation.

THE valour and prudence of one man, by that prevalency which these qualifications have

on

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on the opinion of his fellow-countrymen, become the good of the whole, and creates him their general in times of war and danger ; this brought Cincinnatus from the plough.

THE same may be said of wisdom in the minister, piety in the priest, and probity in the legislators of a country ; the same powers which give men authority over others by enjoying these excellencies, make it the public utility that they should be in power ; the cause of choosing operates to the advantage of those who elect, and all the community receives one mutual benefit, from this superiority of a few members, and the propensity to yield submission to them in the multitude.

THUS in nature, the powers amongst men which gain the ascendant, are those which ought to obtain it ; authority and submission become one reciprocal advantage : hence without doubt have risen all the different governments in the world, and in this way it is still continued amongst the nations of America ; wisdom and valour impart power and authority to the pos-

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cessors ; the subordination which preserves the whole, is justly preserved by it.

WHATEVER then in a nation tends to destroy the influence of these original qualifications, so far tends to subvert the government ; for nature has never yet suffered a right effect to be produced by a wrong cause, and consequently every artificial supply must sooner or later fail, and prove destructive.

IN this kingdom, where I am, this acquired and false authority of wealth has totally prevailed over the natural and true ; all subordination is vanished, virtue, understanding, and every other quality which influence in original nature, have lost all prevalency.

FROM this it follows, that the deepest briber being elected in the place of the deepest thinker or worthiest man, the good of the electors and elected are become separate things, and the man who has given them ten thousand pounds for their votes, has ten thousand vices and inclinations to satisfy by means of it.

THIS

This principle of venal influence in this manner, running from the lowest to the highest; is it not to be feared, that hereafter all men may be chosen into offices of state, for the sake of their power of giving money, or serving him that is then at the head of the treasury? and the whole authority which human perfections ought to possess, no longer influence in the favour of any one?

GENERALS, admirals, secretaries, and all the long list of ministerial men, may obtain their offices by means of some sinister influence, and not the natural; even down to the mayor or portrieve of a poultry corporation.

In this manner it may happen, that tho' riches increase the means of making a state, like this; great in one respect, they may destroy it in another; and the depriving men of superior abilities, of that authority which they ought to possess, hurts a nation a thousand times more effectually, than the advantages which attend wealth can do it service.

FOR this reason it seems necessary, that to preserve a nation happy and free which is constituted like this, to have ministers which would be revered abroad, and loved at home; it should have laws enacted to prohibit the increase of wealth in the individuals, beyond a certain sum, the excess of which should be deposited in the public treasury.

THIS, indeed at present, would appear very visionary and ideal, in the opinion of the present statesmen; yet, Lycurgus carried the restraint of money to a much greater height than is now necessary, and preserved the constitution of Sparta whilst that restraint continued; and tho' an Englishman would not choose to lye upon hurdles, and eat black broth, yet he might reasonably endeavour to give those excellencies in nature that weight which was originally designed them, and preserve that country which every man ought to love, because it is his own.

THIS I flatter myself will explain the reason, why virtue has been observed to be the protecting power of republics, and the ruin of them followed

followed the desertion of that celestial influence, by the introduction of riches. Does it not appear absolutely certain, that this sinister influence of wealth, creating one universal depravation in the minds of those who elect the representatives, who should govern in a nation, has deprived every ruined republic of the use of those virtues and perfections of humanity, which would have preserved it.

IT is not because there are not at present men of abilities, probity, and understanding, in England, that the ministry is supposed to be composed of a different kind of men ; but from this reason, as those superior qualities are rarely joined with wealth or ambition, these slide into corners, or are not able to win authority thro' want of that bastard power of riches, which has usurped the throne of the legal heirs of it, the exalted attributes of mental nature.

METHINKS it was this pernicious power of riches, which ruined the Carthaginian state ; in commercial nations, a rich and selfish merchant overbears the man of small property, vast integrity, and sound intellects ; the nation's welfare

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fare in his interested eyes, is the success of his own private business; hogsheads of tobacco, barrels of rice, tuns of sugar, and bales of cotton, make, in the opinion of the separate traders in these commodities, the nation's whole concern; circumscribed in knowledge, and hood-winked by lucre, they would press all mankind to their private advantage, and spread yet farther the thirst of money, and the fatal effects which attend it.

TELL me whether these men are right in their practice, or I in the judgment of what I have sent you.

I am your most obedient servant.

L E T.

LETTER XLIV.

*To the Reverend Father VINCENZO
SPINELLO, at Rome.*

Dear Sir,

I AM much pleased with your approving of what I have said on the influence of money, in republican and mix'd governments; and not a little flatter'd with your request of seeing my reasons for what I have asserted in relation to monarchic states being able to bear a greater degree of riches, than those which I have already mention'd.

IN states where any part of the legislative or governing power is elective, the people, after they are once become venal, can pay no regard but to money; this purchases their self-love, in opposition to the love of their country: the heart of man in money-loving kingdoms, is not proof against the seduction of self-interest;

and it inevitably happens that the public benefit, grown old and infirm, is strangled by the hands of private advantage in full vigour.

Too many people of great riches, in a free nation, create an equality which is detrimental to the whole ; nobility is but little worth, where a man of the meanest birth, and basest education, can make part of the legislative power : in this kingdom a taylor with three hundred a year, may be a member of parliament and cut out laws as he did garments ; and if he has ten thousand a year, he may make his *quietus* with a borough ; tho' not with a bare bodkin, as Hamlet says, yet with a large sum of money, and be prefer'd to the descendant of a Howard.

HENCE you may see, that money, banishing all other excellencies, becomes the sole envied object ; it gives power and superiority, and happily supplies to the ignorant what they want in worth and understanding. A nobleman, tho' he makes part of the legislature, is more on a level with a commoner in this kingdom, than in any other upon earth.

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For this reason it happens that the inhabitants, postponing every other consideration, lay their whole stress on getting rich, and neglect making themselves wise, as a matter less demanding attention.

Is it then absurd to restrain this rage of money, and subduing every human qualification of superior excellence to that pernicious power, especially in this constitution, where the increasing desire of it has already been almost the ruin of the kingdom?

In a monarchic state, all honors proceeding from the crown, the power of riches is much inferior to what it is in a mixt or republican; tho' money is not without influence, in such nations it has much less than in others, and tho' it may possibly purchase the ruling power of a minister, it cannot long preserve and protect him in that place, without acquitting himself with address.

WHEREAS a minister of England, once elected by faction, or interest, may be sustain'd by his

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his venal friends, in opposition to the king and the peoples rights and inclinations ; he that can rule the parliament, rules both, and is at ease.

A MONARCH always places honors above wealth ; there is in that state some subordination. A nobleman of France is what no citizen can be, and something which every citizen must respect, and pay regard to ; no riches can make the latter a companion for the first, but by condescension : Whereas in England a peer of the realm, and an importer of wine, if the latter be rich, are so near upon a level in company and privilege, if the merchant be in parliament, that besides their titles there is scarce any difference worth six-pence.

THE church and army are inferior to commerce in the present mode of thinking ; thus subordination is due only to money, and two men of any profession are equally esteemed, who are equally rich, from him whose art is of service to his country, and has spent his life in study, to him who behind the counter sells hobnails by the hundred.

IN

IN a monarchic state, the men of superior qualifications will at last succeed, because it is the monarch's interest to have them near his person. The king of Prussia would fetch a general from the wilds of Siberia, who excelled all other men ; and purchase a negro from the middle of Africa, who could improve his nation's commerce and welfare ; he would bestow immense sums to draw Homer from the shades, to converse with Solon, Numa, and Lycurgus, and at last find perhaps, included in himself, the science of them all.

WHEREAS, there have been ministers in this island, who would have transported such men, were they to be found in England, to the countries from whence the Prussian king would draw them, and spread the reign of ignorance, as wide as they did their own.

IT is the interest of a monarch, to be directed by the wisest heads of a nation ; and of a minister in a mixt government, to have the weakest in his troop, over which he may govern.

IT is difficult to find much submission in men of genius, the crown of knowledge seldom respects the cap of folly; it is dangerous therefore, for a weak minister to employ abler heads, at least he is timid, and fears his residence will be but short, when good sense becomes an inmate in the same house, to which he is not equal.

MONEY then, in monarchic states, cannot find its way to be arbitrary, as it does in others; the king cannot be long purchased from his interest, tho' the people may; and therefore, that native influence of superior sense and virtue, is surer to succeed, and longer remain in such a government, than in those of other kinds; for these reasons, it seems to me, to be no greater hardship to live under the influence of a monarch, where the ministers are chosen for their real deserts, than in a government where all is influenced by money, and the choice of them is owing to that or faction; and tho' one may be called a free state, and the other an arbitrary, yet perhaps, as much essential freedom and true happiness is to be found in the former, as in the latter;

latter ; and a French slave has equal liberty with a free Briton, in the real conduct and course of things.

NOBILITY and honors being respected in France, money not having the power to govern, and good understanding and knowledge of all kinds finding yet that influence which they originally derive from nature, wealth may more safely be permitted to increase in that kingdom, than in England ; it cannot there subvert the ways of providence, by giving to gold what is due to virtue ; and, as in this island, placing the cap of folly on the head of liberty, hood-wink and entice her to ruin, as a cur leads a blind beggar to the places and dangers he pleases.

THUS then, the money which will ruin a free state, may preserve an absolute ; the subordination which is established makes honor the great motive to all, and the universal preservative in a monarchy : the levelling idea, which money introduces into a mixt government, expels all just authority, and ruins the state which virtue only can preserve ; such is the condition and advantage of France, and such the fate and

folly

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folly of England. I fear I shall tarry here long enough, to see the last gasp of true liberty, and England fall, like Rome, a prey to its own natives ; for to the cause I have already assigned was it not owing, that the Roman liberty sunk in the arms of the Cæsars ? Shows, bribes, and pecuniary rewards, seduced the people from the choice of virtue, to the love of wealth and pleasure ; to preferring those whose iniquitous designs presented them with the latter, to the former whose virtue would not permit them such behaviour. I am,

Your most obedient servant.

L E T.

LETTER XLV.

*To the Rev. Father FABIO MARETTI,
at Rome.*

Dear Sir,

IF I am not mistaken, I have somewhere read, that it was once a matter of debate amongst the Athenians, whether they should permit another string to be added to the lyre, whose power was already known to be so extensive and prevalent, over the minds of men.

A SUBJECT of this kind would at present be looked upon by the senate of this kingdom, from whence I write, as a most frivolous enquiry, and not worthy the attention of men of understanding.

YET to me it seems necessary, in all kinds of government, that every thing which can prevail upon the passions, the source of action in most men, should be strictly scrutinized before it be permitted; and tho' it be granted, that

music

music may have power to charm savages from their fierceness, may it not have also the effect of soothing civilized nations from manhood, and thus introduce as great an inconvenience as advantage ?

IT is true, there are martial as well as tender powers in music, and the same strings which soothe the lovers pain, may animate the soldier's glory ; besides this, there is yet another ill consequence which attends this art, which is, that the frequency of being present at entertainments of music, may destroy the power of both, and thus the utility which should be derived from harmony, be lost in the frequent repetition of it ; or even in some minds, whose composition is more harmonious than others, it may draw attention from things of greater moment, and drown the esteem of useful science in a flood of seducing pleasure.

FOR some one or other of these reasons, I suppose, his holiness has forbidden all wind music assisting at high mass, the organ excepted ; he has found, I presume, that the voluntaries

of

of the flutes and hautboys had claimed greater attention and deference from the audience, than the elevation of the host, and high mass : the essential duty of a catholic was postponed to the pleasure and powers of music, which ought to be its diversion ; in truth that the zeal for hearing the instruments of these masters, had dissipated that for prayer and prostration before the deity.

THIS, tho' an Englishman who gave me the account seem'd to think extremely ridiculous, I cannot avoid approving, as whatever seduces men from their religious duty, is an object of a sovereign's care. When the concerto was finish'd, it seems, the greatest number of the audience left their devotion and the chutch, without attending the most essential part of their duty.

An indulgence of this kind converts a temple dedicated to heaven, into a theatre, and changes religion to amusement, till the mind becomes pleased with nothing but the music, and the duty of offering up our prayers to heaven is evaporated in the joy of hearing an enchanting

piece of harmony breathed from the lips of a skilful musician : this is preferring decoration to use.

SOMETHING like this has been the consequence of preaching twice every Sunday in the churches of England ; the audience are become critics in sermons, and nine in ten frequent churches for no other reason, than that of deciding whether the preacher be a good orator or not, it is no longer duty but diversion ; prayer is contemned and neglected, and the oration the only thing worth their attention, without which the churches are empty.

AT the reformation, when the peoples minds were to be converted from popery to protestantism, it was thought requisite that sermons should be deliver'd twice a day, to change the sentiments of those who were bred catholics ; and perhaps at that time such harangues from the pulpit were absolutely necessary to gain on the hearers, and bring them over to that change of worship.

BUT

BUT it happen'd in that respect as it has since, at the revolution ; the very things which were then useful, have been since render'd detrimental by their continuation, and the proceeding in the same way produced a continual scene of changing, till the effects of these causes want as much to be opposed, both in the church and state, as those of popery and arbitrary power did at the time of the reformation and revolution.

P R E A C H I N G against the catholic religion, has at last preached all religion out of the kingdom ; and acting on presbyterian and Whig principles, all government.

T H E first has created a contempt for doing the duty of a christian, in making sermons the chief object of the peoples attention in religious acts ; and the latter a slight for the idea of kings, in making the minister the ruling power, in contradiction to the sovereign's rights, and peoples liberties.

T H I S nation seems at present in that dead calm, which is observed to precede a storm ;

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and heaven only knows what the workings of this ocean of people may throw up after the tempest which must agitate it, is subsided.

If it persists long in this way, it will exhibit a new phænomenon in political nature, that a nation can hold together without the uniting principles of religion and government (for I cannot call the names of things their realities) ; most certain it is, that the active powers of these two parts are almost totally annihilated.

THINGS appear in this light but to few, I own, and the foreboder of evil is the derision of most ; yet surely the hour will come, when this divination will be accomplished, and the liberties of England be overwhelm'd and buried by some irruption, not less fatal than those terrible eruptions of Vesuvius, which have buried men, herds, and cities, in one common grave ; alien as I am, I cannot avoid weeping over this sickening state, and wish that a new land of liberty may rise, Phoenix like, from the ashes of the old. I am,

Your most obedient servant.

L E T-

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tioned with ; trifles very poor and if disorder
will come as to hand side in small town and
as to the number of inhabitants in towns

LETTER XLVI.

England said to written word and our Tongue
To the Reverend Father DOMINICO

MANZONI, at Rome.

Dear Sir,

AFTER having long lived in this island,
and as I imagine, having made myself
something acquainted with the manners and
capacity of the natives, I see no reason to re-
pent being born an Italian, and tho' not replete
with all the glory of an old, yet not displeased
with the lot of being a modern, Roman.

METHINKS, if the producing great men
in all kinds of human excellency, be an honor
to a country, Italy bids the fairest in the world
for that reputation.

THO' it must be allow'd, that this isle has
produced men of genius in all kinds of litera-
ture, and some equal to what any nation has
ever bred, yet there are other parts of genius, in

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which it has been very deficient; the pencil has never shone in the hand of an excellent painter, nor the chissel mimick'd life in that of a sculptor, who have been natives of this kingdom; and tho' perhaps amongst the ancient Romans there were none truly excellent in either of those arts, who were born Italians, yet the revival of letters and genius in Tuscany, has given birth to masters in each way, which have excell'd all the modern world, and rival'd the old.

MUSIC too has received its powers and honors from the Italian genius, and no European nation has been the parent of artists in this study, who have merited any comparison with the musicians of Italy.

IN this science also England has yet produced no great master, tho' at present the natives are much advanced in the true taste and knowledge of music.

THAT the church has spread her influence more or less over all the world, from the chair which receives our sovereign pontiff, is a truth which will admit of no dispute.

OR

OF what nation then could a man be born, where so much honor could be drawn from his place of nativity, as from the land of Italy ; and tho' the English reproach us with the name of slaves, let them support their freedom as long as we did ours, and then we will allow them the merit of preserving that liberty which they assume. I have often reflected on the different conquests, which have been made by Italians over the face of Europe ; we first conquer'd the valour of all mankind by arms, then the understanding by letters ; to which, and to our language, all Europe has been subdued ; the soul was submitted to religious influence, from the see of Rome ; the music, painting, and sculpture of Italy have obtain'd homage from all the nations of Europe : what is yet more singular than all the other phænomena, science and letters have twice risen to their zenith in that land.

WHAT is there in nature in that spot which at different times imparted to man these excellencies, a thing unknown to any other nation upon the globe ?

THE very remains of ancient Rome are a delight, which can never take place in this country; for, tho' buildings may tumble into dust in all nations, what land can boast to have produced such illustrious inhabitants, whose characters are constantly annex'd to the ruins of Rome? I am suspicious the British senate, so fond of being thought to resemble the Roman, has produced no beings which can in any sense compare with those of ancient Rome. Where shall we find a Brutus, Scævola, Fabricius, Regulus, Decii, Scipios, and Ciceros, in the list of those who have fill'd the English senate-house; will sir Thomas More answer to them all?

I THINKS, a nation settled into arbitrary power, is preferable to one which is breaking into that state, as a sterile land is preferable to a tempestuous ocean.

THE moments which pass in those destructive times, are terrible to the inhabitants of those countries where they happen, I shall therefore

fore as soon as possible quit this island, before this Sampson of a minister in blindness, and mere brutal strength, pulls down the pillars of the constitution, and buries himself and his fellow-subjects beneath its ruins.

WHEN this calamity has happen'd, will there then remain the sounds of dulcet harmony, to soothe their distress; the charms of painting and sculpture to fascinate the mind, and withhold it from reflecting on its lost condition, as in the city where I drew my first breath?

THE poor, and rich if any remain, will they then have that enthusiasm which warms the heart of penury in acts of devotion, that spreads itself thro' all Italy, will their distress awake their vows to heaven, and their sufferings recall the banish'd comfort of religion?

I FEAR, alas! it will not be prudent to remain here; let me retire like the stork, to other realms, before the everlasting winter of this land arrives. Expect me in Italy, and receive me as your most devoted and humble servant.

LET.

LETTER XLVII.

To the Reverend Father DOMINICO
MANZONI, at Rome.

Dear Sir,

I MAKE no doubt of your having read the *Siècle de Louis quatorze*, written by Monsr. de Voltaire; and being pleased with his manner of recounting all that is necessary in a reign to be known by men of true understanding, and just taste.

AMONGST other things, I could not avoid observing two which relate to England; one of which does this nation much honor, and the other is by no means true.

THE first is, what he says relating to Henrietta, sister of Charles the second; whom, after having given her the description and praise she merited, he assigns as the person who introduced taste and politeness amongst the women of Paris; beings who at that time, according to the picture which he has given of them, at the coming of the

queen

queen of Sweden to that city, were very different from what they are at this hour.

This acknowledgment in favour of English ladies, is without doubt, an honor to the sex in England ; and if the same care had been continued in their education, and manner of living together, the British dames would to this hour have surpassed the French, as much as they did in that time ; they want nothing but that culture, and their manners.

The other remark is certainly not true, where he says, that science and literature past from Italy thro' France into England ; if it began first in Florence, it certainly leaped from thence into this kingdom ; the very best English writers have lived before the revival of letters in France.

SIR Thomas More, Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, Beaumont and Fletcher, these four in the dramatic way, are yet much esteemed ; the first of them the greatest genius which any nation has produced, and the present support of the theatre.

SPENCER

Spencer in another kind of poetry, excellent and immortal; Lord Bacon, Sir Walter Raleigh, and many others, who are to this day the honor and esteem of England, and Englishmen.

WHAT truth then can there be in what Monsieur Voltaire says, in respect of the English having derived science from the reign of Lewis the fourteenth, when these writers were dead before he was born, and the English stage at the perfection it is at present?

THIS then, must have risen from design or malice, neither of which can have any effect on those who read him, and know the history of this kingdom; he must certainly be better acquainted with what relates to literature in England, than he appears to be in this account.

METHINKS it is impossible in thinking of this man, to avoid reflecting how intimately the greatest meanness may be allied, in the human composition, with the most exalted talents, and

and a bad heart destroy the powers of an able understanding.

THIS very man is a most convincing instance of this truth; with powers of intellect which might gain an ascendant over all understandings; with an aptitude and facility of expressing his sentiments, not to be found but in few; concise and clear without descending into frivolous littlenesses in remarks; precise in his observations, leaving enough to chance and the course of things, and yet, assigning sufficiently to the intervention and design of man, for the honor of human nature.

WHAT a mortifying thing it is to say, after all this, that a littleness of soul, mixt with this understanding, has debased this man to the commission of the meanest actions.

His base jealousy of Maupertuis, has lost him his reputation, and his trifling with the king of Prussia the Friendship of that monarch; fallen from a situation to be envied by every man, who would chuse to pass his life in that delicious manner, which can only be en-

joyed

joyed by the friend and companion of a king, in whom royalty and science have made a perfect union, the rarest phænomenon upon earth; the great comet will probably make a hundred revolutions, before they may be again found so perfectly combined in the head of a monarch.

Who then in looking on the understanding of Voltaire, must not pity him in this loss; who that turns his eyes on the qualities of his heart, must not despise him for deserving it?

Alas! such is the condition of superior intellects, that nature seems to have taken pleasure in humbling their superiority, by some inferior qualities blended in the heart, which reduces almost all men to the same level; a Verulam and a Voltaire have only proved the widest vibration of the pendulum, from the farthest point of superior knowledge, to the opposite of extreme folly, between which all the various characters of human kind may be found.

WITH

L E T T E R XLVII. 175

WITH extremes in neither, may I live uncared for by the greatest, beloved by the best, and tasting neither exaltation nor debasement, die your friend, and that of mankind. Adieu,
I am,

Most affectionately

Your most obedient,

L E T-

LETTER XLVIII.
*To the Reverend Father FABIO
 MARETTI at Rome.*

Dear Sir,

IS it not true, that mankind in their accounts of nature's productions, have made their circle shorter than they ought, and not enough attended to the whole progress which she takes?

PERHAPS, if we could penetrate into the parts which compose this universe, we should discover all to be the ancient philosophy of the *το εν*, and in fact, no more than one eternal system of truth and perfection.'

WE are accustomed to see, that every spring pushes forth the leaves and blossoms, the juicy summer swells, and the purple autumn ripens, the clustering grape, and then conclude the process finished.

THIS

THIS is the annual course of nature in producing that fruit, short, and of six months operations only ; yet, this is not the whole process of that single production : years varying in themselves, may generate the most perfect fruit but once in a hundred ; and this enlarges the circle of nature in that respect, and indicates that to know all the effects of suns, rains, and other causes, of the greatest excellency in the fruits of the earth, we should attend a longer circulation, than the short-lived revolution of six months.

PERHAPS the whole combining causes of this effect are not happily united but once in an age, and the perfect wine of Burgundy is as rare as a comet ; tho' wine be the production of every year, as stars are every evening's prospect.

THE same seems to be true in regard to mankind ; tho' every year produces numbers of men, much resembling one another in form and understanding ; yet, the happy union which creates genius comes extremely rare, and is in like manner a phænomenon of more than centuries, to

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produce a comet upon earth ; which, contrary to those in the heavens, is less gazed at and admired during its reign amongst the lesser mortals, than when it has passed away, and is no longer visible but in its effects and remains.

THOSE whose penetration fathoms that all mankind have been alike at all times, are extremely superficial ; were the old Britons like the present ? And did the old Romans resemble those of Nero and Caligula's reign ? Who was there in these latter times at Rome, who would have imitated the self-devoted Decii ? Will an Englishman at present resign his head to be severed from his body, because he cannot renounce the oath which he has taken, as did the virtue of Sir Thomas More ? will he smile at the executioner, and with a serenity of soul meet the block, as easily as a table spread with dainties ? No fires will ever more be lighted, to burn a willing martyr in this land, and perhaps in no other in Europe ; the spirit is fled.

IN genius, as in resolution ; in superior sense, as well as superior firmness of mind ; in the foul, as in fruits and flowers ; there are points of time

in

in a national history, which are more excellent than others.

PERHAPS some refined and subtler capacity may see the causes of the exaltation of these faculties in men ; but whoever looks on them at the hour of their being in highest perfection, has his eye turned on a wrong point of time.

WHATEVER must be the combining powers, which produce these phænomena, it is at their birth, and not at their full growth of manhood, that they must be discovered.

THAT there are happy periods, which are creative of such superiority in nature, can scarce be denied ; because, generally more than one man receives the tincture of these excellencies at the same time, and a general exaltation of human faculties reigns at one æra in the same kingdom, more than at all others.

To say then, that men have at all times been alike, is to say something which experience proves to be untrue ; but to assert that the whole

circles of two kingdoms, from their dawning greatness to their final dissolutions, are much resembling one another, is what approaches very nearly to veracity ; the whole progress of two nations ranged side by side, resemble one another in their parallel points, more than the same kingdom at two different times ; an old Briton and an old Roman, had more resemblance than Cincinnatus and Mark Anthony, or Sir Francis Drake and the late Admiral Mathews.

THE great care then, which should be the pursuit of every minister, is to find proper objects for the soul of man, and preserve that self-consciousness of its own greatness, which is natural to men of the most exalted spirit.

No ministers have so manifestly mistaken the ways of governing men, as the late ministry of this kingdom ; one total ignorance of human nature, or design of subduing all hearts to the influence of money, has been the favourite scheme ; and because men have been purchased to do wrong, they have vainly imagined, that

they might be bought to do right, which is in many cases impossible.

THE ridicule which has been thrown upon patriotism, honor, integrity, and religion, have done more real mischief in a political sense, than millions of money, nay than any sum can restore.

THE laughing these things out of countenance has debased the spirit of the nation ; and too much reasoning on every thing will have the same effect, I mean what is called reasoning by the present half-thinkers of this island.

WHEN the sacred notion, which is annexed to honor and these other qualities, are laughed away, there is an end to all true incentive amongst men ; and if soldiers of any kind are animated by any other motive besides, it destroys the very idea of a soldier ; there must be something that has the air of romantic in the manners of that nation which attempts great actions, and succeeds.

IN the last war, the navy had all the captures given to them, which were taken by the

respective captains; by this means honor was laid to sleep, and many were broke for cowardice at the end of the war, who had gotten great riches during its continuation; the commander who was as active as Mercury, or any other thief, in catching merchant ships and prizes, was as lame as Vulcan in pursuing a man of war, and an acquisition of honor.

THE nature of a soldier was by this means totally subverted, by placing his motive to action on wrong springs, in the human composition. There has never yet been a nation, who has greatly exalted itself by what is called superior reason; some kind of enthusiasm has been the source of all great actions: self-debating makes all pursuits cold and inanimate, and finds too little reality in any thing, to risque much for the obtaining it; even country, wife, family and friends, are unequal to that production in a reasoner.

THE Greeks owed more to the love of their country, which animated them to the service of it, than to all their philosophers and sages; the Romans

Romans were fired to action by the same incentive.

With all that knowledge which Boullain-villiers has so liberally bestowed on the Arabs, they would have rested in their dry deserts, without daring any thing of consequence, a set of thieves and plunderers, if Mahomet had not inflamed their minds by views of paradise, to actions of immortal daring.

WHAT have we seen in almost our own times ! the Dutch performing miracles to save themselves and their morasses from the Spaniard, when public virtue in poverty urged them to action ; and now they are overwhelmed in wealth, as private men, they would scarce move a finger to defend their country from invasion, because that public spirit is expired.

NOTHING then is so weak in a minister, as effacing the prevalency of those ideas, and pretending to supply all by dint of money.

THEY may indeed bribe men to be assassins, informers, and destroyers of their country, by means

of the pernicious influence of gold ; but to virtue, valour, and public good, it is scarce possible ; there is something repugnant in the nature of these things, to the accepting pecuniary rewards ; a military order hanging at a button-hole, a ribbon crossing a breast, the word *honor* even, can do more in the hands of a great man, than the millions which were squander'd the last war ; with it every thing may be atchieved, and without it nothing.

I think, a government should never suffer any disquisitions on the nature of such things, or permit men to reason themselves, as it is call'd, out of every virtue, into the pursuit of every vice ; the fashion of examining all things, is unrealizing every thing which is active in the human frame.

How easy is it to laugh a man out of what must give him fatigue and trouble, into an opinion of ease and safety ; money is never won by pains ; the soldier who mounts the breach, has five-pence a day, and the change-alley Jew gets a thousand pounds during that time ; yet, the former, I presume, is the ho-

nester

nester man, and defends the property of him who laughs at him for the folly of being shot at for five-pence a day, whilst the latter is honored for his riches ; a Jew who has plundered his country of a million, finds a kind reception by a minister, when a soldier, who has sustain'd his country's honor at the loss of his limbs, is denied admittance.

THE very value of money is as ideal as that of honor, and an American chief would despise gold, who would be piqued to any desperate action by glory ; a blue bead of glass, or a common mirror, will operate on them stronger than money, at least it would till the natives of Europe seduced them from their original state ; and I believe, at present a belt of wampum, deliver'd by an Indian chief, binds them as truly to their words, as any treaty made amongst christian princes at the Pyrenean mountains, Utrecht, or Aix la Chapelle ; they have affixed an idea of sacred to these things, and farther than these ideas operate, no treaty can bind or oblige, in whatever manner it may be executed.

THIS

THIS nation, of all the others of Europe, has suffer'd the most by neglecting the influence which honor has amongst them ; the very nature of its constitution prevents it from being filled with numbers of persons distinctly honored for their service ; here is no inferior order of knighthood, and a simple knight is to be found amongst grocers, tobacconists, cheesemongers, and other trades ; which effaces its effects, and renders it below the consideration of a man who has deserved well of his country, either in arts, arms, or science.

To o many honorary distinctions also, as the nation is of the mixed kind of government, would render that part which bestows honors, too powerful ; those so distinguish'd would find an attachment to that alone, and the balance would preponderate on that side. In France the king is not divided from the country's interest, (the people of England think he possibly may) ; but universal honor, consider'd as sacred, would have a just and true influence on all ; nothing discovers this so effectually as a regiment of soldiers, which has been once esteemed

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esteemed for some gallant action, the same spirit runs thro' it for generations, and the least exalted man of the kingdom becomes animated with the gallant soul of the corps, in six months after he has been listed amongst them, and filled with a spirit of bravery, to which he was before a stranger ; and yet, the pay of these men is no better than those of other regiments, where no such animating principle prevails : in the day of battle the honor of the regiment shall operate on their minds, stronger than untold sums of gold ; and this spirit grows by indulgence, whereas that arising from money is ruin'd by its reward.

THIS is the present fate of England, adieu,

I am your most obedient servant.

LET-

LETTER XLIX.

*To the Reverend Father CURTIO
MARINELLI at Rome.*

Dear Sir,

IF multiplicity of printing is a proof of much learning, the state of letters was never in so flourishing a condition as at present ; and yet, notwithstanding this, it really was never so truly the contrary, since the first rise of learning in this island.

NAY, so true it is, tho' it may seem paradoxical, that even that art, which was the greatest propagator of science, is now the most likely to prove its destruction, and printing will probably become the greatest enemy to letters.

To produce works of science, supposing that there are men of genius in a kingdom, literature must be held in honor, and caressed ; genius is as coy as a virgin, and will make no more advances to the company of the great, than

chastity in Susanna did to the two elders : it feels its own superiority, and generally being united with pride in the same breast, rather shuns, than officiously seeks the acquaintance of superiors. This may be blamed with justice perhaps ; and yet, such is the nature of man, that a genius is as little affected by moralizing, as a dolt.

YET, though pride prevents their seeking superior company, necessity obliges them to seek sustenance. It has been my constant remark also, that laziness is almost the inseparable companion of superior parts ; they despise what they discover with so much ease ; and yet far from being humbled by it, they contemn ten times more those who cannot see so much, and yet admire that little.

DOUBLY lazy from the ease of doing things, and the ill-judging opinion of those who praise awkwardly, and shew by every remark that they have never conceived the author's design (for an eulogy misplaced catches the heart of none but the weak) they seek the shortest way of getting the

the most money, and since they are not sought by the great, necessarily become the hackneys of booksellers.

Reduced to this stage, genius is not the thing which is best paid for: abstracts of authors already famous; compilments of compilments of all kinds; dictionaries in arts, science, physic, trade, commerce, love, and rascality; for, the scoundrel's dictionary has been lately printed in London, which I hope will compleat the work and taste of it; are those which have best rewarded the compilers.

All these things are sure pay; the author's sheet brings him his money, which he and his bookseller have agreed for; he eats and rests in peace, without the pain of thinking, when he has done his daily labour.

On the contrary, if by the strictest application, a man should have discovered any thing new in science or art, advanced the welfare, health, or happiness of mankind, perhaps he may, after seven years pains, be rewarded by a bookseller

full

full as well, as if he had compiled the works of former authors, or translated three whole months from the French.

HENCE it must happen that science and literature must soon be quite disgraced, being without honor and polite reception: the booksellers not daring to print what may lessen their former property in authors on the same subject, timid to engage in new works, and the writer in no state to publish for himself (for it has been much the fate of genius, to be wedded to poverty in this kingdom) it follows, that literature must naturally fall into decay, and science seems to be at a full stop.

ALL these dictionaries, and compilments in arts, are just well enough written to flatter the understandings of the ignorant, and amuse with that moon-shine of knowledge, which gives just light enough to mistake one animal for another, and impart one kind of deceitful colour to all objects.

IN truth, these abstracts, and compiled works, seem to be contrived, to make every one who reads

reads them, understand nothing, and render the authors, from whence they were drawn, altogether unstudied, and not understood: thus, letters will be probably destroyed by letters.

THESE are the present advantages, which are drawn from genius and printing; and in this manner it must remain, unless more men of rank, fortune, and nobility, will follow the noble example of the Earl of H—ss, and give countenance to genius, when it appears in this country.

FROM this state of things it must happen, that the French academies of belles lettres, and sciences (the first of which is honorable without pension) must at last conquer the genius of England in letters.

HONOR is the vital principle of every thing that is truly praise-worthy; the person who attempts a work with that view, will always endeavour to give it the utmost perfection he is able; the other to finish it as soon as possible, money being the research of the latter, and eternal praise the object of the former.

To

To make literature thrive, and call forth the latent seeds of genius, academies of this kind should be establish'd, where productions in belles lettres might be read, and the opinion of the best judges taken, before the work is given to the world; this would impart lustre to letters and weight to the performance; and booksellers might then seek writers, as the latter are obliged to seek them at present.

A GENEROUS reception at the tables of the great, as learned men are sure of finding in Italy, would impart a more polite manner of conceiving, or at least delivering sentiments, than at present prevails in this kingdom.

THE ladies, methinks, should be as fond of presiding in a circle of learning, as in a tumult of cards; and a duchess might draw as much honor from having the politest assembly of men of letters, as from that of the greatest rout. I wish the time would come, when the females would universally make that manner a rule, and every lady's fame depend upon her reception and encouragement of the literati: this has prevail'd

in Italy and France, and one lady you know, the celebrated Laura Bussi, has obtain'd a professorship, and been made member of the academy at Bologna, which she supports with honor, and has a chair in their assemblies destined for her alone.

To despise the understanding of women, is to lose the grace of many kinds of writing, and sometimes the matter; knowledge from the sex, like diamonds from the hands of the lapidary, receiving its figure and brilliancy, tho' they do not create the gem. Adieu; I am,

Your most obedient servant.

L E T

LETTER L.

*To the Reverend Father BATISTA
GUARINI, at Rome.*

Dear Sir,

IT is by nations, as by individuals, there is no more pretence to expect perfection from one, than the other ; the most exalted people, like the most exalted understandings, have their foibles and vices, like those who bear no rank in the nations of the earth ; and tho' there may have been certain æras in which they seem to assume the nature of angels, there are others where they join that of the brute ; it is the condition of a whole community, as well as of those individuals which compose it.

NOTHING is more common than to see a man of superior understanding duped, in the most common articles of life, where men of much less sense would have escaped ; the most preposterous and absurd passions, the most ridic-

culous and ill-founded prejudices, possess minds, which if we saw no part of them but their superior hours, we should scarce credit the weakness into which they fall.

No nation is more replete with experiments of this kind, than this which I now live amongst; indeed the inhabitants of the whole earth have the same seeds of foibles, but the plant does not thrive to the same degree, which is to be seen here; every thing commonly met with of that kind in England is a caricatura, compared with what is to be found in other kingdoms.

It seems to be the particular design of this government, as it is now administered, to let the minds and dispositions of the inhabitants run wild, into all extremes which do not intermeddle in their maxims of state.

THERE is one weakness which seems almost universal, which is, the unwillingness to allow any merit in the French productions of arts, science, and literature; and tho' there are a thousand instances, in which, many customs amongst the French might be adopted with advantage,

in the encouraging arts, sciences, learning and commerce ; yet it is sufficient that they are French, to inhibit their being introduced into this country.

A PERSON who gives the due praise which belongs to that nation, and to his own countrymen, is considered as little less than a rebel, and runs no small risque of receiving some displeasing expressions ; he will most certainly be ill thought of, and considered as a well-wisher to the Gallic nation.

THE aversion to all which is the product of that people, is the reigning passion amongst the number of this island ; and many a useful pursuit has been quitted, because it was originally French.

THIS disposition is of much disservice to the national good, and this envy or hatred is for ever breaking out in companies, where any one speaking in the favour of French manners, is generally considered as depreciating English ; tho' the whole intent of that speaker be, to have the same introduced into his own country, and make

it as perfect as possible: in truth, to speak well of France, is the same as to speak ill of England, and is generally received in that manner.

THIS taste is notwithstanding to be considered as general, rather than universal, and yet, it is perhaps, as universal as any custom in the kingdom; the people of good sense and knowledge of the nation, are not to be numbered amongst them however.

IF you praise the Spanish honor, the Italian music, painting, sculpture, and architecture, the German bravery, there is not the least visible jealousy; an Englishman is the most ready creature to avow their superiority, in these particulars; but if the French are mentioned in the like manner, there will be ten thousand difficulties started, he will make a hundred evasions to avoid acceding to that truth, which he cannot absolutely deny; there is a kind of contempt for all that is French, and yet a base fear of their superiority.

THIS has its influence in the statesman also, and under the delusive notion of the superior bravery

bravery of Englishmen, they leave their kingdom unprovided with defence, presuming that English peasants who have never known the use of arms, because they have never been trusted with them, can repell an invasion from France, of a regular and well-disciplined force.

THIS very neglect is a monstrous expence to this kingdom ; it renders a fleet of ships necessary to defend their coasts in two or three places, which, after all, are ineffectual where the passage is so short, if the best seamen are to be credited.

By means of this, double the men of war become necessary for the English, that are for the kingdom of France ; the last destine none to the defending their coasts, and are at ease about the ill effects which any descent can cause, because they confide in a militia well train'd in arms ; the English dare not quit theirs, because they have not land forces equal to repel an invasion.

AN imitation of their neighbours in this respect would certainly be of infinite use, and

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preserve the nation from that ruin which threatens it, unless the ministry may hereafter prevent it, by ruining it themselves : it is difficult to decide with what other view this infatuation, of neglecting all military discipline, can be suffered amongst the common people.

IN Paris, I observed a very different turn of thinking ; it is the French fashion to talk much of the superior excellency of the English, in arms, science, and learning ; to so great a degree is that carried, that a gentleman has written a comedy, called the Anglomania ; indeed it has never been presented but privately, however, it is sufficient to shew the present reigning disposition of the Parisians.

NOTHING can recommend a thing at Paris, more than having it said in its favour, that it is of English production ; our silks are preferred to their own, and the royal family of France has been more than once cloathed in the manufactures of the English : a gentleman, who is imagined to understand these affairs well, has told me, that the ballance of trade between these two nations, illicit and permitted, is in favour of England ;

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in this however, I am a true catholic, and act on implicit faith.

THIS I am sure of, that no scheme will be rejected at Paris, because it comes from London, and none left unrewarded ; because I have known several that have been well received ; tho' there is more than one in this kingdom, who having contrived useful machines, have yet never met reward or encouragement, and at present languish in obscurity.

THAT England has once been the deserved wonder of Europe, is certainly indisputable ; the fire has blazed extremely bright, and the fuel has been the sooner consumed ; the present ministry, whose duty it is to continue that supply, are inattentive to the consequence, and consider it possible for the great particulars to be at ease and happy, without caring whether the people are or not.

THERE is scarce a motive to human actions, I mean a laudable one, which is not totally exhausted ; patriotism, or love of our country, is now ridiculed even in the little boroughs; and banished

nished all polite company ; religion has no longer interest sufficient to create a dispute in its favour ; even Lord Bolingbroke's posthumous works do not sell. The minds of the professed free-thinkers, are settled into a thorough conviction, that religion is a plausible error, and at present are in no necessity of reading any thing to confirm them in that idea ; and yet this arises from the insufficiency of all kinds of subjects to move men to read them, and not from improved knowledge, or deeper thinking.

THE whole motive to action in this island is the enriching the individual, where every pursuit is lawful, which does not miscarry ; a man who has held considerable employments under the crown, to whom the distribution of tickets was entrusted in the last lottery, violated the law made on that account, in his own favour immediately, and yet he retains his places, and I hear of no punishment which he is like to undergo.

THE same is to be found in all possible ways where it is practicable ; and yet these people still believe that a nation can hold together,

where every part is corrupted ; they might as well expect this of a human body, and it would be as true ; the cause is hid from common eyes, and others are regardless of the event. I am,

Your most obedient servant.

LETTER LI.

To the Reverend Father FILIPPO

BONINI, at Rome.

Dear Sir,

DURING the time I tarried in Paris, I could never perceive that the French music was ever adapted to the words which accompanied them ; no passion whether love or hatred, anger or despair, were attended with those sounds, which are uttered by those who are under the influence of either of these passions.

THE lover, but for his action in his tender passages, would to my hearing have been indistinguishable from those in his rage ; the music seem'd as well adapted for the expressing one sensation as the other in each circumstance ; this made the French opera a most displeasing entertainment to my ears, especially when every thing was accompanied with a squawl, which is as much out of tune, as the crying of cats, or a pig leading to the slaughter.

NOTWITH-

NOTWITHSTANDING this, to the sense of seeing, an opera in France is an agreeable amusement; even the chorus of singers, which made my ears thrill with horror, offered an agreeable entertainment to my eyes, and in some measure abated the distress of hearing; and tho' Jelliott gave me pain in his singing, yet Dupr 's charmed me with his graceful attitudes in dancing; the eye is exquisite, and the ear almost void of distinction in the natives of France. Yet it must be acknowledged, that the little *chansons   boire*, and gay sonnets, are set naturally and well, and all the others insufferable; these are innate to every French creature.

PERHAPS the French language, which seems but badly adapted for poetry, is not capable of being set to music, in parts which express the pathetic or any other passion; and the same fault has crept into the sounds which form their language, thro' want of accuracy in the organs of hearing, that has into their music from the same cause.

METHINKS,

METHINKS Voltaire writes much better in prose, than poetry ; and no poet, Rousseau excepted, amongst this nation, has succeeded so well in verse as in prose ; the language is absolutely repugnant to the measures and sweetness of true versification ; yet it becomes prose extremely well in most kinds of writing, particularly the narrative, airy, and trifling, in which it excels all languages that I understand.

THE language of Great Britain is well adapted for poetry ; it has a strength which is not to be found in the French, and a variety which is wanting in the Italian, from that kind of monotony which attends our words being terminated in vowels.

INDEED, after having lived long amongst these sounds, I am inclined to think, that no language is better form'd for being well put to music than the English ; and Mr. Handel, and others of their own composers, have shewn, that this observation is true beyond contradiction ; a thing which I never could perceive in the French compositions.

YET,

YET, this does not seem to have much influenced the opinion of the inhabitants of this island ; a few women, and a few men, who are judges of harmony, for the same reason that birds are of pneumatics, because one has fled thro' Italian music, as the others have thro' the air, determine all in favour of Italy, and a castrato is the only singer, and Italian the only melody on earth.

To such a degree is this carried, that in complaisance to the most miserable set of Italian singers that ever accompanied any instrument above a salt-box, or a Jews harp, an English opera, composed by an English musician, was prohibited being presented ; and the living language of a country, capable of equal graces with the Italian, well set to music, which was universally understood, has been postponed in preference to bad voices, unknown language, old scenes, and dirty cloaths. This is encouraging foreigners in a true sense, and outdoing the good Samaritan, who, tho' he poured wine and oil into the wounds of a stranger, did not presume

to starve the natives of his own country ; this then is the land of true hospitality.

IT is a true observation of the English, that they love their country, and are not much attach'd to loving one another ; and that the Scotch love not their country, but are very warm in affection for their countrymen ; and yet the Englishman shall continually exclaim against England, and never quit it for another place ; and the Scot harangue in the praise of his native land, and never wish to return to it.

METHINKS, the language which is most capable of being set to those sounds which accompany sensations of the soul, should be the best ; and as the inhabitants of this earth, whether white, brown, or black, express their feelings by much the same tone of voice in joy or sorrow, fear, hope, anger, or love ; it is a most amazing thing, how the sounds which express those ideas should in themselves be so different, and that words which have no affinity in sound, should express the same idea, as *ερως*, *amor*, *love*, in Greek, Latin, and English, or how that feeling, which seems to be one in all the different

different breasts of an Athenian, Roman, and Briton, should prompt the organs of speech, to such different pronunciations.

This to me appears more difficult to be explained, than the origin of language itself; whoever observes on what passes in the human mind, must have remarked, that every object of the senses, as naturally prompts us to speak of it, as to attend to it.

THE excellence or singularity of any object will urge us to express it by some sound, as will novelty, and ten thousand other circumstances; besides, there is a certain, tho' perhaps inexplicable connection between the organs of speech, and those of the senses. Who can hear an exquisite performer in music, behold a finished piece of painting, taste a delicious fruit, or smell an enlivening odor, without being prest by the excellency of each to an exclamation in their praise; and this as well alone as in company?

But that the natives of one side of a river should call the same objects by different names,

from those of the other, or a ridge of mountains change the sounds of a whole language, of beings of the same kind, is a most singular phænomenon to my manner of conceiving things.

PRAY tell me, what account can be given for this, or whether any account can be given or no?

Is it possible, that the souls of creatures, so much alike in form, can be so different in their sensations, and the word *odium* in Latin, signify the same with that which is meant by *bate* in English?

IF this should be received as a truth, it would make the writings of one nation, tho' the language be translated, unintelligible to another ; the ideas in each continuing different, tho' the words are truly changed for each other ; thus, *to love* in English, is *amare* in our language, and *to bate*, *odiare* ; and yet, if the sensations which attend these words are as different as the sounds, it must be evident that the writers in these two different tongues must be unintelligible to each other, according to the original meaning, tho' justly translated.

THE word *odiare*, translated into this *to hate*, conveys to the Englishman's mind that idea which belongs to the English word, and not the Italians, and so in the inverse : from this, if the difference of sensation is equal to that of the sound, these languages translated convey very different ideas from the writer's design.

SOMETHING like this is true, but there is not all the difference in the sense of these words, which there is in the sounds.

LET us suppose, that all the ideas of sensation, from passion, and other interesting emotions, in the breasts of the inhabitants, are actually as different as the sounds of each nation ; yet, this would only help us in that alone, and the objects of our senses, colours, odours, and others, would still remain insolveable, by this manner. Surely, men do not see things so very different to make the same object known by *il bianco* in one language, and *white* in another, as in Italian and English.

THERE is then something more than has yet been discovered, which is the cause of this

variety of language, in nations separated from one another by such little divisions as rivers or even a ridge of hills.

Pray tell me then, how to solve this difficult phænomenon, and please myself and others, who would gladly be acquainted with an explanation of it. I am,

Your most obedient.

LET-

LETTER LII.

*To the Reverend Father FILIPPO
PAMPTA at Rome.*

Dear Sir,

WHATEVER my observations contribute to your pleasure, they answer something more than I expect, and all that I desire; you seem pleased with my last, and wish me to explain what I appealed to your judgment for a solution of: this is drawing water from a scanty well, when whole rivers run before your gate.

INDEED, I am yet at a loss to satisfy myself, whence it happens that brutes speaking universally the same language intelligible to one another, that men on this side the channel, and of the other, should yet not understand each others expressions.

A FRENCH cock is well understood by an English; and the sounds with which a hen calls

her young, tho' uttered by a Spanish hen, would still be understood by chickens hatched under an English.

AN Arabian barb, and an English stallion, speak the same language ; their defiances and other sounds are truly understood by one the other, tho' the first was bred on the plains of Mecca, and the latter on the meadows of the silver Thames ; the same is true in the language of dogs, and other quadrupeds.

FROM this one would be led to conceive, that brutes were better adapted to their state, than the beings of human kind, in this provision of a language universally understood, and man not the favourite animal of its creator.

THE reason, Sir, of the universality of one, and the diversity of others, may be understood and perhaps find some explanation, tho' the cause may not ; that is, we may probably see the final cause at least, tho' we never discover the efficient.

IT has been a long lamentation amongst the learned, that all books of literature, and science,

science, have not been written in one language, or in other words, that there should be more than one language spoken in the world.

THIS they imagine would have shortened the way to knowledge, and rendered arts, sciences and letters much sooner attained, and much farther extended, without the lost time of learning words, and their signification; the application which is now given to one would have been destined to the other, and acquiring knowledge taken place of studying sounds.

THIS seems extremely probable to a hasty view, which only looks on the coasts, and delineates the shoars of learning, without travelling into the interior parts of it, to discover the true nature of its soil, inhabitants, and productions.

WILL not the very contrary of this appear to be true? and, considering the nature of man, will not the different languages have given rise to the revival and propagation of letters in all countries, where they have flourished.

WHATEVER seems to be secreted from the knowledge of man, is the pursuit which is followed with the utmost avidity by the mind; we love to penetrate beyond what is the common force of nature, and excell the rest of that species of which we make a part: this would not so much have influenced where one language had been open to all.

IF we consider what are the effects of novelty, that incentive would have been extinguished, had knowledge been continued in one language. The ancient writings of the Greeks and Latins, at the revival of learning, came with all the charm of being new, because they had been so long unknown; and even with a different joy, that of reverence for antiquity, which perhaps in many instances, has carried the character of men above that station which they possess in the realms of Parnassus: a continuation of the same language would probably have made all men loose in their pursuits, and obliterated the very traces of learning; sciences would have burnt out like a taper, and have been no more relumined.

WHEREAS

WHEREAS the desire of knowing something which others do not, pushes men to the acquiring language, and the knowledge which it contains, and the long lying unknown, imparts a delight to the re-appearance, like the budding trees, and flowery vegetables in spring, after a long winter.

THO' this should not please you, which I have already said, methinks this may obtain a better fate, which I am about to say ; it is, that discoveries, in whatever language they are written, are understood perhaps by thousands, and perhaps not by one in a thousand ; it is scarce possible to know, whether an author be truly understood by a reader, unless he can proceed one step farther than the writer : if he does not accomplish this, how can we be sure he has gone the whole length, or understood all that which is already written.

MEN who have conceived new thoughts, and been born with real genius, would have been excellent tho' no one had written before them ; and discoveries of any kind can have been

but little advanced by those who have gone wrong, unless it may be in keeping succeeding authors from treading the same road.

No author has a title to greater honor than he deserves, and the man who advances two steps beyond what is esteem'd already extraordinary, merits the highest praise, and national reward; but this is not yet the sole reason of variety of tongues being spread over the globe; this diversity of language is yet a stronger boundary than mountains, seas, and rivers; had one language been intelligible to all, the common people of the earth would have been alike, and the customs of other lands known to them, without reading, from common conversation, which are now for ever hid in obscurity on the account of that deficiency.

If English had been the universal language, for example, would the Pole and Bohemian have lived as slaves, and been sold like cattle with the land to a new lord? they would certainly have sought new kingdoms, and, being alike intelligible every where, have travelled the round world to fly slavery, because their language would

would have served them equally as well in all parts, as in their native land. Methinks one uniformity of customs would have been the inevitable consequence of one language, universally understood.

But as it is, the different languages are almost an invincible bar to the poor people, who would desert their native country ; they have no power of explaining what they would have, or do, and are consequently held at home, in spite of all inclination to be free ; the difficulty is too great to be attempted, in their present embarrassment,

A GENERAL language would make people travel into another kingdom, as little reluctant, as at present they do into another province of the same realm ; and national attachment would have been long lost, if one language had been spoken by all the nations of the globe.

Who then would have frozen beneath the north pole, or in the snowy hills of Lapland, thro' a tedious night of six months ? or parched

on

on the dry desert of Arabia, unsheltered from the sultry sky ?

THREE parts of the globe had been a desert, had one language been universally spoken, and others too crowded with inhabitants.

THIS seems to be a probability well founded in nature, when we see how easily men, who speak various languages, lose their natural prejudice, and are disposed to be indifferent whether they breathe the air of England, Italy, or France; and with how little reluctance, great numbers of Germans leave their native lands for those of America, where they know that their native language is very readily spoken, by former settlers.

THE customs of France and England resemble each other more and more every day, and more than any other two people in Europe; as that language is more known by the English, than by other people, they have long followed French customs; and the French since the introducing the study of the language of this kingdom in Paris, are following the English in their

their turn ; as these increase, the people will become still more resembling, till the difference be scarce perceptible, and all distinction lost, like the force of two opposite currents becoming one by the prevalency of the strongest, or blue and yellow falling into one uniform colour of green. It is impossible but that an universal language would have effected an universal sameness of behaviour and customs, long before this, by the vast intercourse which the christian religion and commerce, have made amongst men.

To this variety of tongues it is owing, that the Laplander thinks happiness no where to be found, but on the other side the artic circle, and prefers his whale oil to the juice of the Bur-gundian grape ; and the Arabian die unrepining, in a land which denies him even water, to slake that thirst which it creates ; this is the boundary which preserves the different climates of the earth inhabited, and scatters the human being uncomplaining, amidst suns, and shows, on sands and mountains, insufferable to men brought forth in happier climes.

THIS

THIS then, seems to be the great use, and final cause, of various language: the world would have been made in vain, if three parts had been left unpeopled, and contentment found no where in man, but in the few selected and paradiseic spots of this vast globe; eternal feuds and misery to man had been the consequence, and mountains, rivers, seas, separated kingdoms ineffectually.

I HAVE probably tired you by this time, in this research. I am,

Your most obedient servant.

L E T -

LETTER LIII.

*To the Marchioness of **** at Rome.*

Madam,

IT is not an easy thing to resolve the question which you ask me ; the ladies of England do and do not paint ; that is, there are many who exclaim with great acrimony against that villainous custom, whilst the rouge is blushing on their cheeks ; probably there are not three women in the kingdom who would openly avow it, as the ladies of Paris do without the least hesitation. From this present shyness in the affair, it is only used as an art to help nature at a dead list, after nocturnal riots, and the emotions of those gentle passions, which attend a run of ill luck at cards ; at which time the husband is sure of having a double potion of her choicest spirit of gall, and her face a double quantity of enlivening red.

THIS fashion will probably gain ground in this kingdom, as that kind of life which makes

it

it necessary, is in a very thriving way, and a duchess will very soon be distinguished by her complexion, as easily as an inn-keeper's wife, or by the coronet on her coach, till the face becomes one entire red, spreading like the colour on the nectarine, and growing higher by more sunshine and time ; or like the light of the moon beginning on one edge, extend till it covers the whole orb.

THE ladies of England do not understand the art of decorating their persons, so well as those of Italy ; they generally increase the volume of the head by a cap, which makes it much bigger than nature, a fault which should be always avoided in adorning that part.

FEMALES as square at the shoulders as the statue of the Farnesian Hercules, not long since covered the whole bosom, with a great white handkerchief spreading over the shoulders, which gave that part the air of a new kettle-drum ; and this because a celebrated beauty, tall and slender, appeared well in it, and gave it the name of a vandyke : we frequently see the hoop which is too big for a lady of six foot high, tied on about the waste of a woman of four ;
by

four, by which means she has reduced the diameter to be twice as long as the perpendicular height, and all proportion destroyed ; a full dress woman takes up as much breadth as is to be found in many streets, and will with difficulty pass through the old triumphal arch of Titus, without brushing the sides.

THEY wear their petticoats too short behind, and not imitating the most graceful birds, as the ladies of Italy and France, in a trail of their robes upon the ground, lose the greatest grace which dress can impart to a female.

NOTHING is so various as the habits of English ladies and gentlemen, the waxing, waning moon, is no simile for their changing ; they not only vary the colours and designs of their silks and velvets, as the French do every year, but the garb is cut different in every month, from the great to the little cap, from the long to the short sleeve, so that the head shall be lost this month in a cloud of white linnen, and the next as bare as the shorn pate of a capuchin ; in like manner the hair itself, from the antique plat, which gives grace to the

head-dress, when the hair is abundant, and looks like rats tails when in small quantity, to the loose ringlet which adorns the swan-white neck, or the cropt locks which look like a horse's main newly cut, or a hedg-hog in wrath, are never adapted to the heads which should wear them.

IN truth, not beauty but novelty governs in London, not taste but copy; a celebrated woman of five foot six inches gives law to the dress of those who are but four foot two; and a slender shape and easy air assigns the size of the stays for the fattest women in the kingdom.

THUS, nothing is so common, as to hear the ladies of this nation assure you, that such a shape is quite out of fashion, and the present reigning mode is the slender or large, as if the creative power, like the hands of mantua-makers, had cut the human person by a new pattern, and thrown away the old; or mended its hand by practice.

OWING to this love of novelty it is, that if a lady of noted beauty in her face has a large waste, every woman in six days is imitating

imitating her where she can : tho' the features be the great charm, the shape is only imitable by art, and a lady of a span girt is starving with cold, in stays that you can hardly grasp with one arm, lost like a dwarf in a giant's coat of mail ; in like manner, if a beauteous face be attended with a very slender shape, every plump woman in town must be reduced in her size, and prest into a machine of whalebone so tight, that like flies, they appear to be scarce joined in the middle, they wriggle and twist like a loaded horse with a galled back, and martyrs to the mode, cursing it internally, persist in diachylon plaster and tight stays.

THIS is not the case in Italy and France ; the ladies know that the grace which attends plumpness, is unbecoming the slender ; and the tall lady never affects to look like a fairy, nor the dwarf like the giantess, but each studying the air and mein which become her figure, appears in the most engaging dress that can be made, to set off her person to the greatest advantage.

THE sack, which gives the greatest grace to the female shape, is almost out of fashion in

England ; they are returned to the old Gothic way of many breaks and divisions ; whereas, the head neatly drest with a ribband, and the robe flowing from the shoulders on the ground behind, gives a regular pyramidal air, the most ornamental that a whole human figure can take, that is drest, and chosen by painters as much as possible.

I HAVE often imagined, that a lady in her dress should resemble a bird, and the genteelst woman imitate a peacock, the finest of all birds, letting her robes end in a long train behind ; whilst the head might be decorated with some little kind of coronet like that animal ; for in truth, feathers are cloaths, and the great grace of this bird consists in its plumage.

BUT as there are amongst women all kinds of shapes, as amongst feathered animals ; so every lady should study her resemblance, in that genus of creatures which she resembles ; and tho' you, madam, ought to imitate the pea-hen, and be the queen of the creation, yet other ladies, accommodating themselves to their similar forms, might resemble the duck, goose, pullet, or turkey ;

key; and thus be something, in their habits, like those animals which are drest by nature.

FROM how much ridicule would a regulation in these things preserve the women of this country! at present you see the lady who is gracefully formed like the pea-hen, walking in the public gardens with the bob-tail of the duck, and the goose-like dame waddling with the unnatural long train, which follows so gracefully behind the majestic march of the peacock.

THIS is yet a further proof, that the sense of beauty is not the prevailing taste of the English; if it was, such unbecoming and shifting fashions could never take place amongst them; their milliners dress them like no creatures of God's creation; and after having tarried two months in some little country-town, and exercised their invention in making caps, ruffles, and mantlets; they all return to London piping hot, and, amusing their customers with a Paris-voyage, christen this cap with the name of Pompadour; that handkerchief, Orleans; this mantlet, Conti, or any great name; sometimes

they borrow words from the religious orders, and call them Capuchins or Cordiliers, and thus spread universal disgrace on the taste of France, which has never beheld such frightful dresses since the days of Hugh Capel.

HAPPY woman that gets the first cap of a new cut, and proves, that the imitators in dress, like those in poetry, have more servility than genius, and are ignorant of their own proper force.

SUPPOSE, Madam, I get a subscription from the ladies of this nation, to send an ambassadress to implore your presence in these realms, to preside over the government in fashions.

You may be stiled the secretary of modes and graces, and have as much honor, and as many places to bestow on your favourites as a secretary of state, all to females. I am convinced you would bring your division in administration to greater exactness than it is in the government, and not running in debt, reduce yourself to the patching an old coat with a new piece,

piece, because you have not money enough to buy a new one.

IT is as certainly true in governments and nations, as in old cloaths and new wine; that the first is spoiled by patching, and the latter lost by being too soon shut up: The first speaks the system of leaving things unattended to so long, that they can scarce be repaired by a new piece of expedient, and the precipitation of corking up schemes before they have sufficiently fermented, is signified by the latter; by which it comes to pass, that the poor old coat of England is become more rent by these new pieces; and the money, suddenly raised, as suddenly dissipated by ineffectual explosions in the application.

PRAY Madam, forgive this manner of finishing my letter in politics, which differs from its first setting out as much as the dissertation written by a Bishop of Ireland on tar-water, which beginning with tar, ends, I think with predestination, or something as far from the original; yet he calls it a chain of reasoning. I am,

Madam,

Your most obedient servant.

LETTER LIV.

*To the Countess of *** at Rome.*

Madam,

AMONGST the many works of literature, in which this nation and the French are rivals; that of theatrical entertainments has been as much controverted as any whatever: each in its turn has asserted the superiority of its writers above the other.

SHAKESPEARE by the English, and Corneille by the French, are cited as proofs of the superiority of English and French genius, and each advocate equally hardy in sustaining the glory of his nation.

YET, Madam, after as candid and impartial a disquisition of that which constitutes genius, as I am capable of making, I frankly confess, to me it appears, that Shakespeare was the more exalted being, in all that constitutes true superiority

ority of soul. Regularity of plan, in dramatic performances, is the work of art; conception of character, and their support thro' a whole theatric piece, the child of genius. Many men, nay all the French writers in tragedy, have reduced their productions for the stage, to the rules of the drama; yet, how few of them, or of any nation, have exalted and finished the ideas of personage in their pieces, to any degree of sublimity, and perfection.

FROM this difference we must necessarily conclude, that the power of conceiving and preserving just characters in writing, is more rarely found, than that of planning a play; rules can teach one, which can effectuate nothing in the other; and many men may design, what not one in a million can execute.

FROM this, must it not be concluded, that if Shakespeare exceeded the French writers in conceiving, and justly sustaining characters in tragedy, that he was of a superior genius to the greatest of the French nation?

THIS, you, madam, who understand both languages, shall decide; but permit me to point out

out such characters as have never been conceived by any French tragic writer, conducted and sustained in a manner which no other nation has ever seen, ancient or modern.

IN the tragedy of Othello, the Moor all artless, open, and brave, is seduced by the wiles and subtilty of the hypocritic Jago.

THE seeming simplicity of an honest heart is so exquisitely supported, and practised by him on the unsuspecting disposition of a virtuous, valiant, and ingenuous mind, that no instance is to be produced of any thing parallel in any theatrical production.

IN each of these characters there is not one mistaken deviation; every spectator excuses the Moor in his being deceived, and pities with sincerest sorrow the fate of open honesty, seduced by artifice and wiles.

THE difficulty is not easily imagined, which attends the preservation of these two characters. The Moor must be supported as brave, sensible, and honest; the skill lay in preserving all these

these from the imputation of weakness in Othello, thro' the conducting the imposition which was to be play'd upon him.

THE simple, plain, and seemingly artless cunning of Jago, was attended with no less difficulty, to preserve the separate characteristics of this personage, without deviating into one instance, which might betray his design to a man of sense, is of all things the most difficult.

YET, thro' the whole conduct of both characters, there appears no one violation of the intended and original design of the poet.

IN this consistency of character, the superiority of the English poet appears above all others, unless the critics devoted to the Greek, and antiquity, should contest it in favour of Homer; you, madam, will allow, that the great Corneille affords no instance of this nature, comparable to the English author.

His management of Cassio, and Roderigo, is in the same simple, natural, and apparent honest strain; we see that the deceit must be invisible to such men. The scene in the third act, between
Othello

Othello and Jago, where the latter first insinuates the idea of jealousy into the mind of the Moor, that timidity of accusing the innocent, that regard for the reputation of Desdemona, with the insinuation against her fidelity, are so artfully mixt, that it is impossible, but that Othello must have been insnared by his manner of conducting the conversation ; how inimitable is his pretended love for Othello, his conjuring up the Moor's resolution to know his sentiments, by distant hints and suggestions, and when Othello breaks out,

I'll know thy thoughts,
he answers,

You cannot, if my heart were in your hand ;
Nor shall not, whilst 'tis in my custody.

At this seemingly determined secrecy, the Moor pronouncing “ ha ! ” Jago with all possible art cries out,

Oh ! beware my lord, of jealousy ;
It is a green-eyed monster, which doth mock
The meat it feeds on. That cuckold lives in
bliss

Who, certain of his fate, loves not his wronger :
But

But oh! what damned minutes tells he o'er
Who doats yet doubts, suspects yet strongly
loves?

This speech necessarily turns the thoughts of Othello on the idea of jealousy, with all the appearance of nature, and refined art; and then by proceeding in the same manner, he leads him to examine the conduct of Desdemona, and creates a suspicion of her infidelity to the Moor, from her having chosen him, and refused those

Of her own clime, complexion, and degree,

From this he draws an inference which reflects on the character of Desdemona; this almost convinces the Moor of her being false to his bed, and he desires Jago to set his wife to watch Desdemona. In answer to this, the subtle villain pretends to intreat Othello to think no more of what he had told him, to attempt discovering Desdemona's true disposition, by the vehemence of her suit to him for restoring Cassio, and to believe his fears for his honour had been too importunate in the affair; with this he leaves him. In all this scene there appears nothing

thing which can discover the Moor weaker than an honest, plain, brave man may be allowed to be; not one step carried beyond the truth in nature, by Jago.

THE knowledge of the promptness of jealousy in the bosom of man, which the author shews in the character of Jago, is beyond all comparison; when he has possess the handkerchief which Desdemona drops, he says,

I will in Cassio's lodgings lose this napkin,
And let him find it. Trifles light as air
Are to the jealous confirmations strong
As proofs of holy writ. This may do some-
thing.

The Moor already changes with my poisons:
Dangerous conceits are in their nature poisons,
Which at the first are scarce found to distaste;
But, with a little act upon the blood,
Burn like the mines of sulphur.

At seeing Othello enter, he continues;

Look where he comes! not poppy nor man-
dragora,
Nor all the drowsy syrups of the world,

Shall

Shall ever medicine thee to that sweet sleep

Which thou hadst yesterday.

THE operations which the jealous mind undergoes, were never so truly described by any author ; the trifles light as air, the tasteless poison of a hint becoming mines of burning sulphur to the soul, and the irrevocable power of sweet slumber to a mind haunted with jealousy, are beyond all conception just, great and sublime, and I think to be found in no other author.

THE Moor enters with a conviction of the truth of what Jago had said in the above soliloquy ; his mind now burning with suspicion, lighted up from those sparks which Jago had thrown upon it, without seeing him, he says,

Ha ! false to me.

to which Jago replies,

Why, how now, general ? no more of that,
Oth. Avant ! begone ! thou'lt set me on the rack.

I swear 'tis better to be much abused
Than but to know a little.

THIS

THIS answer shews that the revealing this infidelity of Desdemona, had made Jago insufferable to his eyes ; the combat between the violation of his bed, and the love of Desdemona, working strongly in him, he therefore swears 'tis better to be much abused in secret, than not to know what may be avowed to be sufficient to vindicate the vengeance which an injured man should take upon the author of his dis-honour. At this Jago, fearing lest he should retreat from the degree to which he had brought him, delay the pursuit, and relapse to love, cries

How, my lord !

Othello answers,

What sense had I of her stol'n hours of lust ?
I saw't not, thought it not, it harm'd not me ;
I slept the next night well ; was free and merry :
I found not Cassio's kisses on her lips :
He that is robb'd, not wanting what is stol'n,
Let him not know't, and he's not robb'd at all."

IN this speech, the whole bent of his mind
is turned on the mischief and disquiet which
Jago's

Jago's discovery had brought upon his soul ; without his revealing it he had been happy, untouched by pangs of injury. Jago's answer is,

I am sorry to hear this.

Othello proceeds still in the same sentiment, exclaiming

I had been happy if the general camp
 (Pioneers and all) had tasted her sweet body,
 So I had nothing known. Oh now, for ever
 Farewell the tranquil mind ! farewell content ;
 Farewell the plumed troops, and the big war,
 That make ambition virtue ! Oh ! farewell,
 Farewell the neighing steed, and the shrill trump,
 The spirit-stirring drum, th' ear-piercing fife,
 The royal banner, and all quality,
 Pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious war.
 And oh ! you mortal engines, whose rude
 throats [feit,
 Th' immortal Jove's dread clamours counter-
 Farewell ! Othello's occupation's gone !

THESE reflections bring back on his soul,
 like the returning tide, the wretched change of

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situation which Jago's discovery had produced in him ; upon which Jago asks,

Is't possible, my Lord ?

OTHELLO, still improving the former sentiment, and feeling his fallen state with infinite sensibility, flies impetuously into rage, and seizing Jago, cries,

Villain, be sure thou prove my love a whore ;
 Be sure of it ; give me the ocular proof ;
 Or, by the worth of mine eternal soul,
 Thou hadst been better have been born a dog
 Than answer my wak'd wrath.

When proceeding in the same passionate manner, Jago answers,

Oh grace ! oh heaven defend me !
 Are you a man ? have you a soul ? or sense ?
 God be w' you ; take mine office. O wretched fool,

That liv'ft to make thine honesty a vice !

Oh monstrous world ! take note, take note, oh world !

To be direct and honest is not safe.

I thank you for this profit ; and from hence I'll love no friend, sith love breeds such offence.

THIS

THIS speech contains as much art, as ever entered into the conception of human nature. He first appeals to Othello's humanity and understanding ; then at that instant, as intending to leave him, he says "God be with you," and throws up his commission ; he then exclaims at his own folly that has thus converted his honesty into vice ; when throwing a sarcastic reflexion on the world, and thanking Othello for this information of what is to be expected from man, he determines to renounce all love for human nature. What ideas are there to be imagined, which can be thrown together with more judgment, and propriety, to reclaim Othello from that outrage which he has committed ?

IT has its proper effect ; the mind of man, strongly agitated between two passions, suddenly veers from one to the other, like the uncertain blowings of a storm ; in consequence of which, Othello comes about to believe that Jago is honest, and says,

Nay stay—thou should'st be honest.

R 2 Jago,

Jago, who perceives this approaching change, answers,

I should be wise, for honesty's a fool,
And loses what it works for.

After this, Othello, reduced to the æquipoise between the love of his Desdemona, and the truth of Jago's story, cries out,

By the world,
I think my wife is honest, and think she is not:
I think that thou art just, and think thou art not.
I'll have some proof.

This suspence Jago seizes, to fix him in the firm opinion of her being false to his bed; when Othello says,

Give me a living reason she's disloyal.

At this Jago recounts what Cassio said in a dream, and wins upon the mind of the Moor entirely; at which he cries,

I'll tear her all to pieces——

Jago, not content with this, most artfully mentions to him the handkerchief in the hands of Cassio, which he had formerly given to Desdemona: this rivets him in the belief of his being dishonored by Cassio; at which he exclaims,

Oh

Oh that the slave had forty thousand lives !
One is too poor, too weak for my revenge.
Now do I see 'tis true.—Look here, Jago,
All my fond love thus do I blow to heaven.
'Tis gone ——————
Arise black vengeance from the hollow hell;
Yield up, oh love ! thy crown and hearted
throne [fraught,
To tyrannous heat ! swell bosom, with thy
For 'tis of Aspic's tongues.
Jag. Yet be content.
Otb. Oh blood, blood, blood !
Jag. Patience, I say ; your mind perhaps may
change.

Otb. Never, Jago. Like to the Pontic sea,
Whose icy current and compulsive course
Ne'er feels retiring ebb, but keeps due on
To the Propontic and the Hellespont ;
Even so my bloody thoughts with violent pace
Shall ne'er look back, ne'er ebb to humble love,
Till that a capable and wide revenge
Swallow them up.—Now by yonder marble
heaven,
In the due reverence of a sacred vow,
I here engage my words.

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heaven,

In the due reverence of a sacred vow,
I here engage my words.

Having thus wrought him up to his purpose, Jago swears that he will give himself up entirely to the service and revenge of Othello's injury.

IN these last quotations it is easy to see, that figurative expressions, when they arise from the subject, unforced, and unsought after, are the most naturally expressive of passion ; the mind, dilated and carried on by the desire of revenge, rises into metaphor and simile, with the utmost propriety ; the occasion is equal to the conception and ideas, and not the least colour of bombast, or false expression, appears thro' the whole.

IN all the French theatre I knew of no play, in which equal knowledge in human nature is manifested, where two characters so justly drawn, so nicely contrasted, and so well sustained, are to be found ; a common genius would have erred a thousand times in writing such parts, Othello would have manifested a thousand marks of being a fool, in not seeing Jago's designs, and Jago betrayed himself by too bare-faced a conduct of his intention : as it is managed by Shakespeare, there is no one slip or deviation of character in either, in one single instance.

AN-

ANOTHER letter, Madam, may probably bring you farther thoughts on this play; let me here remark however, that great geniuses being difficultly imitated, Shakespeare has been the cause of two vast mistakes, in the succeeding authors of this nation.

THE first is, that they have copied his diversity of scenery, and not possessed the power of conceiving or sustaining their characters as they ought; for this reason, the plays which appear alert, active, and entertaining to the eye on the stage, by dint of stage-trick, and win some applause in the first presentations, are damned in the closet, and never more revived on the theatre.

THE other is, the admiration of that figurative style in Shakespeare, so natural, becoming, and just, as he uses it, filled with ideas answering the words. This has created a manner of writing, consisting entirely of verbage without imagery to sustain it, a cold altisonant, gigantesque shadow, inane and puerile.

THIS, Madam, tho' I fear it may appear to have the air of dictating, has nothing of that in its intent. Permit me then, the honor to know whether you confirm me in this opinion? Whether I ought to deem myself a judge in matters of genius, when I place the author of this, above any writer which the French, or any nation, has hitherto produced: your opinion will determine me. I am,

Your most obedient servant.

L E T

LETTER LV.

To the Reverend Father ALESSANDRO

ADIMARI, at Rome.

Dear Sir,

A MONGST the nations of the earth, how few have yet possess men of true taste and superior genius! and even amongst those, where the human soul has reached that degree which is so much beyond the common race of mortals, how small is that number in comparison of the whole inhabitants!

A VERULAM, or Newton, are but two of millions, which breathed the same British air with them at different periods; these have bequeathed the character of science and genius to a whole nation, for ages to come; perhaps all duration; and many millions of Britons draw honor, esteem, and reputation from the nations around, from what has been the conceptions of these two enlighten'd men.

To

To these and some others it is owing, that the Englishman meets a polite and honorable reception in every court in Europe; not to the battles of Marlborough, Edward the black prince, or Harry the fifth, who have each conquered the French nation in arms; but to these men, who with Milton, Shakespeare, and other eminent writers, have carried the point of genius beyond the wits of the Gallic nation.

ALL kingdoms have in their turn produced men of capacity in military affairs, from the northern Goth, to the sandy plains of Mauritania, perhaps in every nation upon the globe; yet, few have hitherto been favoured with men of great literary genius.

WHEN we recollect also, that many things may conduce to establish the reputation of a general, which can never enter into that of men who study letters; the reason will appear yet plainer, why there are more generals who have acquired fame by arms, than men who have obtain'd it by writing.

THE success of a commander depends greatly on the accidents which attend the day of battle, which he could never foresee, and from which his own sagacity drew no advantage at the moment of their happening. The troops which a general commands contribute greatly to the fame he must obtain, and the officers who are employed under him again, much more.

A GENERAL may rise to the highest reputation, by being engaged against men of little military genius in the enemy's army ; and (without design to lessen the duke of Marlborough's renown) it does not seem unreasonable to imagine, that his engaging against commanders who were of an inferior genius to those who preceded in the war against king William, facilitated the way, and conduced much to his acquiring that glory which attended him in all his actions : is it not probable that Luxembourg would have made the conquest at Blenheim more difficult and dear, than Tallard and Marsin ? And even Villars, who had succeeded on that spot the preceding year, would he have committed the egregious mistakes which

which were discovered by many officers in the French army, the evening before the battle?

Would Turenne have disposed his troops in the same manner at Ramillies, as they were drawn up by Villeroi? And would not better-planned dispositions, and superior judgments, tho' they might not have absolutely disconcerted the duke of Marlborough's extensive capacity in military affairs, have interrupted or lessened the rapidity of that tide of glory, which always bore him so swiftly on to fame.

I do not say this with design to diminish the English hero's renown; but to shew, that fame in military affairs may depend much on the inequality of capacity and talents of those who oppose each other.

WHOEVER of two generals, tho' both men of weak or inferior intellects, prevails in battle, he is honored and considered as a most eminent and great soldier; success gives him this reputation, when probably a man of true capacity, who saw his weakness, would have vanquished him

him with very little difficulty. It is not then, in military matters, the superiority of genius alone which communicates immortality ; but frequently the mistakes, weakness and confusion of his antagonist, which place the crown of laurel on the conqueror's head.

HAD the duke de Gramont pursued the orders of marshal Noailles at Dettingen, would the victory have fallen to the British king, who was present at the battle ?

A THOUSAND accidents unforeseen by the conqueror, sudden pannics, the unequal opposition of inferior genius in the other general, a storm of rain in the enemies face, or even the dazzle of the sun-shine, may give conquest and immortal fame to a general ; neither of which can assist in creating that permanent glory which attends the works of men of the most exalted genius in literary productions.

THE Greek and Latin classics draw no advantage from accident ; their writings stand naked and unassisted by all the incidents which generally communicate success to military at-

chieve-

chievements; their works are criticized and examined in the cool hour of the shade, as they exist in themselves; historian is compared with historian, according to his true and genuine powers of genius and capacity: Thucydides and Livy are viewed and examined, as each exceeds or falls below the other, in all those requisites which are necessary to form an eminent author in that kind of writing: poet in like manner with poet, of the same kind of composition; Homer, Virgil, Tasso, and Milton; in each of these it may be truly distinguished, how much the succeeding are obliged to their predecessors, what helps and assistance they may have borrowed, and their true merit decided and established. Chance then effects nothing in advancing the reputation of writers; I mean that reputation which outlives the author, unsustained by the false taste of men of high rank, the zeal of friends and party, or the whirling whim of fashion, that for a moment bears him to the top of the wheel.

MEN of letters then are tried at a severer tribunal than men of arms; their merit is fixed on more established principles, and a better foundation;

dation; and yet, such is the event, the eclat of fire and sword, ruined nations, kings enslaved, and slaughtered millions, are more the admiration of mankind, than the man of study who advances arts and sciences, happiness and health, a public blessing.

THERE is scarce a more depreciating consideration to human nature, than that the mild arts of peace should meet such little success, and the professors of slaughter and destruction, find applause and honorable reception every where: this disposition seems to be inherent in the nature of man.

FOR myself I confess, when I behold the monuments and tombs of those ravagers, with pompous panegyrics of their military actions, I conceive the greatest abhorrence at their names and characters; I can never esteem that being, whose malicious heart prompts his understanding and his arm by the worst of passions, to the destruction of his own species; he is to my eyes only a robber, more illustrious and pernicious than the common highwayman; and tho' the world have agreed to honor such men, with all that is to be given

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in it ; yet to me, every monument which preserves the memory of these kind of beings, is but a standing satyr against the persons who performed the actions they recount, those who have bestowed on them these superb acknowledgments, all who look on, read and applaud, and perhaps human nature itself.

WHAT is a long list of victories, but a keen invective on human nature ? What are the histories of thousands slain, but a demonstration of our delight in bloodshed ? cities ruined, nations plundered, temples and deities profaned, are the glories of that being which boasts of humanity, and calls itself the lord of the creation.

IF riches crown the event, all terminates well, the author is justified ; the barrier of gold is the sacred impassable defence, behind which the violator is secure from all attacks, unless his conscience sometimes disquiet his enjoyments, and touch that heart with remorse for its possessor, which it never felt for others, in the bloody hour of destruction.

I HAVE wandered from my first design ; but such as it is, pray take it ; and if it be not characteristic

racteristic of the English alone, it is more general, and becomes a remark which may be made on all the nations of the earth, where learning has flourished, that those, who save, delight, and instruct, are infinitely less honored than those who terrify, corrupt, and destroy. I am,

Your most obedient,

Vol. II. and 2d edit. S. 1. L E T.

LETTER LVI.

To the Rev. Father FABIO MARETTI,
at Rome.

Dear Sir,

NOTHING is more disputed amongst those who pretend to be judges of what passes in letters and arts, than the ideas of taste: Each English traveller, who has seen the south-side of the Alps, would imagine himself affronted, if you do not allow him an excellent connoisseur in architecture, painting, and statuary; and all this from pure presumption of having past his eyes over much of the most exquisite of these productions.

If one considers the qualifications requisite for such decisions, I fancy that part of the world which has never travelled beyond the limits of Great Britain, will not be willing to allow these travellers all the superiority which they claim; and tho' they may agree, that in many diseases breathing air impregnated with spicy exhalations, may facilitate

the

the health of the sick; yet in walking amongst the works of the Grecian sculptors, Roman and other Italian painters, the effluvia are scarce strong enough to create so great an alteration in the knowledge of these things, as from ignorance to skill and distinction.

How few of those men of taste who have travelled Italy, have ever studied the human body; it is cloathed and concealed, and almost impossible in the common ways of life to be seen frequently and with attention; notwithstanding this, in every painting and piece of sculpture, they set themselves forth as just judges of every human figure, which can never be obtained but from the thorow consideration of many living bodies.

But to wave all examination of the power of judging of those things which are known by comparison, and where the originals are concealed from proper inspection; let us see how much these travellers have improved the taste of this nation, by their perigrinations, in architec-

ture; Inigo Jones, and Sir Christopher Wren have been excellent, the first equal perhaps to any man amongst the whole list of these artists; and perhaps at that time the three greatest men in the world in point of genius were natives of and resided in this island, Verulam, Shakespeare, and Jones; and had not the too northern monarch, who then sat on the British throne, damped the genius of the English nation by his theological disputes, quaint expressions, frigid conceptions, and frivolous conceits; the fire of that celestial influence had reached yet farther.

IT was then, genius seems to have been most prevalent in this isle, from which time it has declined, and that taste which was its companion, is lost entirely.

COULD you leave the Italian shores, and visit this kingdom, you would be enraptured at beholding the banqueting-house of Whitehall; a more perfect building in true sublimity of taste, is to be seen no where.

WHEN

When turning round, you would behold with indignation, that which is lately built for the horse-guards of the British king, wondering how it was possible that any man in sight of all that is perfect and characteristic, could erect that which is unmeaning, ungraceful and ridiculous ; without strength or any one idea of intention, made up of littlenesses, the turret which is in the center, is so very heavy, and the building so very light that sustains it, you expect every moment to see it drop into the middle thro' want of powers to support it.

THE simple and sublime have lost all influence almost every where, all is Chinese or Gothic ; every chair in an apartment, the frames of glasses, and tables, must be Chinese : the walls covered with Chinese paper fill'd with figures which resemble nothing of God's creation, and which a prudent nation would prohibit for the sake of pregnant women.

IN one chamber, all the pagods and distorted animals of the east are piled up, and called the

beautiful decorations of a chimney-piece ; on the sides of the room, lions made of porcelain, grinning and misshapen, are placed on brackets of the Chinese taste, in arbors of flowers made in the same ware, and leaves of brass painted green, lying like lovers in the shades of old Arcadia.

Now, so excessive is the love of Chinese architecture become, that at present the fox-hunters would be sorry to break a leg in pursuing their sport in leaping any gate that was not made in the eastern taste of little bits of wood standing in all directions ; the connoisseurs of the table delicacies can distinguish between the taste of an ox which eats his hay from a Chinese crib, a hog that is inclosed in a sty of that kind, or a fowl fattened in a coop the fabric of which is in that design, and find great difference in the flavor.

THE Gothic too has its advocates ; you see a hundred houses built with porches in that taste, such as are belonging to many chapels ; even door-cases and the fronts of some dwellings, which might be drawn by one horse like a chaise,

arc

are fitted up in this manner; not to mention that rooms are stuccoed in this taste; with all the minute unmeaning carvings, which are found in the most Gothic chapels of a thousand years standing.

Such is the present prevailing taste in this city.

But perhaps, whilst I am blaming this in the people of England, the same thing may have prevailed at Rome, at least I am afraid of it, if a sample of your whole present taste may be taken from the singers, which you furnish to this city.

To my unpolite ears, the airs which are sung at present have no longer the imitation of any thing which would express passion or sentiment, and the whole merit lies in the Gothic and Chinese closes and cantabiles, frithered into nice-ties and divisions, which, like minute carvings, are the certain characteristics of a little taste, that delights more in difficulties than truth, that would rather see a posture-master in all bodily distortion, than the graceful attitudes of Dupré

on the French theatre of the opera at Paris, in the most exalted manner of dancing.

THE Chinese taste is so very prevalent in this city at present, that even pantomime has obliged harlequin to seek shelter in an entertainment, where the scenes and characters are all in the taste of that nation.

THERE is one part of Chinese manners however, which is not yet put in practice in England ; the little shoes which are contrived to cramp the feet, and confine the ladies to their houses, do not yet prevail ; and I believe that Husbands have not power enough over their wives, to preach them into that fashion, which would oblige them to be mere domestic animals.

IN truth, this taste for littlenesses is advancing a great pace, in all the parts of the national entertainments ; their theatrical pieces in tragedy and comedy, have infinitely more variety of stage trick than character, and ten new scenes for one passage of good writing ; in fact it is the eye which is written to, and not the understanding ; racks, wheels, and other instru-

ments of death, together with a few kicks and struggles at the moment of dying, like a cock turkey beating his wings when his neck is twisted, make up too much of the moving parts of an English modern tragedy. I am,

Your most obedient servant.

L E T -

and will be the most despised by all
and will be the most despised by all
and will be the most despised by all

LETTER LVII.

To the Reverend Father FILIPPO

BONINI, at Rome.

Dear Sir,

If the Italians were the first improvers of gardens, and plantations, the French have excelled us, and the English carried the taste of that embellishment much higher, than it has appeared either in our country, or in France.

THEY have excluded that regularity of plan which makes the design of all gardens in every other part of Europe, and following those ideas which are characteristic of some sensation relating to human nature, have made a garden in England a sensible consideration, and adapted it to all states which are incident to human minds in general.

THE gay and airy temper finds the open and cheerful spots of light, which are acceptable to that disposition, and the melancholy mood finds

the

the solitary and shady grove, by the side of which slowly creeps along the brook, complaining softly amongst the pebbles.

In the English gardens there is infinite variety without regularity, agreeable to the face of nature that diversifies all, and not according to the ancient and present taste of France and Italy, which disposes a garden like a human creature, and carries the image of self into all its designs, with alleys answering alleys, like legs to legs, and arms to arms, and the great walk in the middle for the trunk of the body.

A MANNER of disposing things very natural to the mind of that man, which cannot divest itself of such interesting ideas as self, and yet very unnatural with respect to that which these dispositions ought to resemble.

The *jet d'eau* is quite out of fashion in this kingdom; the cascade, and falling streams bubbling amongst rocks, the winding river without regularity of figure, or strait parallel lines, make the water-works of this country.

IN truth, it is always unnatural to see water rising into the air, contrary to its original tendency.

THIS, however contrary it may be to pure taste, I think in some countries may be allowed of, such as in the summer's days in our native land, when the sultry air is fanned by the motion of the water in the jets d'eau, and the refreshing sense of coolness imparted at once to the feeling, seeing, and hearing; for the two last senses have the ideas of coolness imparted to them, by the sight and sound of water.

IN this island, where intense heat is seldom known, and when it happens is of short duration, there does not seem to be the same necessity of violating the native propensity of water, to obtain a greater pleasure by it, than can otherwise be had.

HOWEVER, this simplicity and grandeur of taste in gardening, which has produced many fine plantations in this kind, is at present suffering with that of all other things; the caracatura and minute are again prevailing in too many places.

THE

viewed from I know not what angle, is the scene of
THE citizen who visits his rural retirement
close to the road, thronged with coaches, carts,
waggons, chaises, and all kinds of carriages,
which differs from London only in this, that in
winter it rains smoke in the city, and in summer
dust in the country, must have his plantation of
an acre diversified with all that is to be found in
the most extensive garden of some thousand acres;
here must be temples to every goddess as well as
Cloacina, woods, waters, lawns, and statues, which
being thus contrived to contain so many things,
is in fact, nothing at all, and that which might be
something by being but one, is entirely lost by
being intended to be so many; one wonders
how so many things can be crammed into so
small a place, as we do at the whole furniture of
a room in a cherry-stone; it is a scene for fairies,

THIS is but the old taste of shaped flower-
knots in box, cut yews, and clipt hedges, in an-
other edition, which has no more taste than the
former.

PERHAPS there is not a thing upon the
face of the earth truer than the belief that taste
is

is the general possession of all men; I mean every man assumes it to himself, tho' he denies it to his neighbour, by which it is at once universal in one view, and a non-existent in another.

THE THERE is however, some analogy between man and all his designs of this kind; the true taste in gardens is formed on what we feel in ourselves, at the sight of different scenes in nature; a garden without this meaning in its disposition cannot please long; novelty indeed, will beget some delight in the beginning, but without scenes which correspond to all situations of our minds, it soon becomes flat and irksome.

To design a garden well, the person must study the ground on which he intends to plant, the nature of those parts thro' which the water flows, and what use can be made of the woods already grown; from considerations of this kind, taste may communicate characters to different parts, and adapt the whole to that variety of passions and sensations, which distinguish the human heart.

THIS

This requires much imagination; it is not sufficient to remember what was seen at any one place; to follow that exactly would be impossible, or if it could be done, the whole would be one piece of plagiarism.

The art lies in selecting the most striking objects, which have affected the mind with any kind of passion or sensation, and then by recalling those ideas, give a combination to these objects, which has never yet been seen in nature, and yet which the eye of a judge will agree to be natural when put together.

This, tho' it may seem a task of no great difficulty, is yet much more so than may be at first imagined; for tho' many people remember what they have seen, yet very few in nature have the power of uniting the parts of various subjects, so as to make one whole that shall be striking, characteristic and affecting.

It is in the combination of visible objects, so as that they may affect the mind with any passion, pleasing or displeasing sensation, as it is

in that of combining sounds, which may affect us with similar feelings.

IN the latter, the tones which accompany the expressions of tenderness, grief, rage, or other passions, must be distinguished and combined, so as to characterize an air either complaining, soft, or angry, which is much the same kind of genius, with that of combining the objects of sight in light and shade, open and obscure, creating horror or delight, indulging love or sorrow.

AS there are few musicians who have excelled in all parts of a grand composition, so there are few who have succeeded in the planning and designing gardens.

ONE master in music is excellent in composing the first violin of a concerto, and meagre in all the rest; others in their favourite instruments with the like imperfections; Corelli fills all, and makes the whole piece one simple and united sound of various instruments, each sustaining and sustained.

IN gardening also, one designer plans the gay part, and fails in the serious; he trills along a little

LETTER LVII. 273

little stream with elegance and propriety, and brobdignags the expanse of water and almost makes a new deluge; Kent, the best designer in this way, is the Corelli of gardeners, as may be seen wherever he has followed his own inclination, in the gardens he has designed.

Alas! the bane of men of fine and elegant taste, and the cause of its sudden decline, is the belief in every rich man who has an inclination to build, or plant, that he has a taste equal to his wealth, and to the undertaking, and a right to obtrude his opinion on the most accomplished judge, in architecture and gardening: this epistle I fear is too much in the dictating strain, when I recollect to whom I am writing, to you whose taste in these arts is certainly just and elegant, from what you have shewn in poetry their sister. I am,

Your most obedient,

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Your most obedient,

LETTER LVIII.

*To the Countess of **** at Rome.*

Madam,

IF the wits of England were as happy as I am, in knowing the superior taste, which you manifest in all you examine in literature, they would have reason to be well pleased with the preference which you give to their favorite dramatic poet, above all those, that any nation has yet produced.

I AGREE with you, his characters are better drawn, and better understood than any other dramatic writer, as you have proved in the many instances which you have mark'd out to me; all his imitators have swelled into the gigantesque in their attempts: their pretended characters, by endeavouring to reach the very summit of the sublime, have been like very tall men in nature, half animated bodies, which, wanting souls proportioned to their substance, appear a languid lump of something bigger in body, and yet less than man in true spirit.

PERHAPS

PERHAPS there is no instance amongst the whole race of writers, where it can be so truly distinguished how a poet may be superior to all men in his conceptions, and sustaining characters in full power in his writings, and yet deficient in giving life, propriety, and action, to the productions of his own genius on the stage.

SHAKESPEARE, the first of dramatic writers, is said to have been one of the least of dramatic actors.

WILL you, Madam, have the goodness to tell me whence this difference took its rise; or since I am upon this subject, and have a peculiar ambition of pleasing and appearing favourable in your eyes; will you permit me to risque some suggestions on that head?

THE variety of characters to be found in Shakespeare, is no where else to be paralleled; not only almost all ranks amongst the living, from the lowest peasant to the crowned head, madmen, fools, philosophers, patriots, tyrants, wits, and men of all kinds of humour; he has past the bounds of this world, and brought back

the very dead, to revisit the glimpses of the moon making night hideous ; the limits of nature withheld him not in his imaginary characters of witches, Caliban, fairies, and others, combined of qualities which all that read agree ought to enter into these compositions, which he has formed without one discordant property.

AFTER this display of the powers of imagination, which had every part of mental nature under its direction, nor that alone, his descriptions of external objects, are as great and just as those of the internal feelings ; is it not amazing that he could not communicate life and action to his own words and conceptions ? In truth, it is universally acknowledged that he represented no character of all that variety which he was master of, except that of the ghost in Hamlet, with any tolerable degree of merit.

IT plainly appears from the direction which young Hamlet gives the players in that tragedy, that no man knew better how an actor

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tor should behave in voice and action, than Shakespeare, and yet no one perhaps was less able to execute his conceptions than himself.

If we consider this truly, Madam, may not some reason be assigned for it from the very nature of genius, which was so excellently superior in this man?

To write well, in him, was no more than drawing water from that inexhaustable source of imagination which he possessed; he saw with accuracy, felt with sensibility, observed with perspicuity, and combined with justice; he had been more engaged in examining how men thought, than how they express themselves by action; and language being the exercise of every hour, he thence possessed the powers of expressing superior to all men the conceptions of his mind, which are also above all others.

No man can write well from copying the manner of others, the imitation looks thro', and bears the mark of servility: no writer was ever less indebted to the works of preceding authors, than Shakespeare.

IN playing the parts which he wrote, the want of observation on the actions of men in those situations, perhaps prevented him from performing well, most of which were ideal with respect to himself, having never seen particular beings in human nature, in the various circumstances of distress and pleasure, in tragedy and comedy, which he has drawn.

HE had imagined all these parts from intuitive knowledge, and internal sensation, and express them with truth and sublimity, by a language which he was perfectly master of.

BUT when he came to give propriety, grace, and action to the very passages which he had written so inimitably well, he failed, the language of action was unpractised in him, in attending to what the heart felt in each passion; he neglected how the limbs should move, and features express; and thus perhaps, tho' superior in the ideal part of a player, was imperfect in the practice of it, as many men who dance but ill can teach others extremely well.

MAY it not be imagined also, that Shakespeare having past his first years in the country,

try, which in his days was not so polite, as at present, and even in hard work (being bred to trade) might have contracted an aukward gait and unbecoming mein, which is the constant attendant of labour, and the effects of which never can be entirely overcome by any future attempts. This, tho' it had affected every motion, and destroyed the grace of action, had not at all influenced the powers of his imagination.

WE see something like this in another view in every day's practice; the men of genius who are born in the parts of a country distant from the metropolis, contract from their infancy a pronunciation which always distinguishes itself from that which is the purest and polite; that is, the organs of speech have taken an awkward moment; and yet, in their writings, nothing of this can be perceived, for tho' words are differently pronounced in the various provinces of a country, yet they are written alike in all; and tho' the ear distinguish the dialect in each native, the eye cannot discover it in the style, where they are spelt the same in all countries.

THERE is something more to be said in vindication of this manner of thinking ; action is for the most part imitation of something seen. This then is a kind of mimickry, which may be learnt by practice and habitude, tho' without doubt, the most perfect action is speaking, and expressing by voice and attitude, what the infelt sensations of the soul suggest ; this perhaps is as rarely met with amongst players, as genius in writing dramatic pieces.

MIMICKRY or imitation, was that which Shakespeare could the least of all men be supposed to be capable of submitting to ; he saw things above all men, and therefore could draw no assistance in acting then like any. The talent of genius is intuition, and not imitation, of combining and expressing objects and sentiments a-new, and not remembering and acting them as they have really past in life.

THUS, Madam, after having insensibly stolen into the dictator from the suppliant, permit me to advance something farther.

A PLAYER may draw applause from imitation, even a servile one, for which a writer would be condemned.

To

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To instance, suppose in speaking to his army, the actor who performed the part of a general, used the very action, attitude, and expression of feature, with which the great duke of Marlborough spoke to his forces ; in thus addressing his theatrical troops, he would have received applause from all the spectators, tho' each knew from whence he drew the imitation.

IN like manner in comic character, the player who takes off all the air and singularities of a real miser, will be applauded ; we say it is such a man.

AND yet, the poet who wrote either the tragedy which contained the first character, or the comedy in which the second was described, would have been his'd if he had taken the real speech of the duke, or expressions and conversation of the miser. Such are the different fates which attend actors and authors, and yet each equally plagiaries.

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behaviour ; we pardon men who mimick the miser in action, and condemn those who steal his known conversation ; a player then may succeed on inferior talents than a dramatic writer, be exalted to the stars for the very reason which prevents genius from success in the same parts ; all men see the likeness which Gripe the player, has to Gripe the miser, and applaud him, then hear the very expressions copied from his mouth, and condemn the poet. After all, it is not impossible also, but this disapprobation of Shakespeare might partly rise from his playing unlike all others, rather than inferior to any. Shakespeare the genius could not imitate any individual man in action, the audience probably could not conceive any thing to be just, above what they had been accustomed to behold in common nature.

IT is now time to ask pardon, and to close this letter, which is already too long ; my next shall tell you how an actor now living, performs some passages of this author. I am,

Madam,

Your most obedient servant.

L E T-

LETTER LIX.

*To the Countess of ***** , at Rome.*

Dear Madam,

SHALL I meet your approbation, when I dare assert, that acting the part of a person of superior life, sublimely conceived and pathetically written, requires more genius than writing a tragedy where five acts of undistinguishable characters, and regular mediocrity, make its whole merit? I flatter myself that your opinion will not be different from mine in this instance, when I have laid before you all that I have to say on this occasion.

IT has always appeared to me, that notwithstanding the apparent raptures, with which men pretend to feel those passages of an author, which place him above humanity, if their own performances in a like nature fall much short of it, that they have never reached in their conception the true spirit of the author, which they have praised.

WHEREAS a player, who personates in every part the living manners of a superior character, manifests beyond contradiction, that he has conceived the true idea of the author.

A POET therefore in raptures with the character of Lear, as Shakespeare has drawn it, who in his writings should attempt something of a similar nature, instead of the sovereign of unfixt temper, choleric and sudden, whose ideas and conceptions express royalty in every part of his anger, should draw a porter in rage, replete with every Gothic grossness, will be infinitely inferior in genius to him, that fills up this character with all that fire and majesty which becomes the personage, as Shakespeare has completed it.

THIS, a player on the English stage perfectly accomplishes: his name is Garrick.

IT may be a vanity; but you, Madam, will pardon even that in a private letter, not designed for the public eye. In the action of all other men I have imagined something yet farther than has been exprest by them; in this player,

player, and in this part, this man has exceeded all my imagination; and as Poussin is considered the painter of men of taste, so in like manner Mr. Garrick is the player.

He is the only man on any stage where I have been, who speaks tragedy truly and natural: the French tragedians mouth it too much, and to appear something more than men, they lose the resemblance of humanity: a hero on that stage, in dress and expression is a complete exotic of all nations, and seems a creature just arrived from some distant planet.

It must be allowed however, that the passion of anger is the easiest to be imitated of all those which the human mind is subject to; but to be angry with superior sovereignty is as difficult to attain as any part, to be executed with that dignity which this English actor imparts to it.

In the first act of the tragedy of Lear, when Cordelia has displeased him by that which ought to have had a contrary effect, his anger is shewn

shewn by very great expression, very just tone of voice, and propriety of action ; yet it still augments, and becomes more energetic, as the rising occasions require it, till at length when Goneril refuses him his hundred followers, and says,

Be then advised by her, that else will take
 That which she begs, to lessen your attendance :
 Take half away, and see that the remainder
 Be such as may befit your age, and know
 Themselves and you.

After these words of insolence, Lear replies,
 Darkness and devils !
 Saddle my horses, call my train together.
 Degenerate viper, I'll not stay with thee :
 I yet have left a daughter—Serpent, monster !
 Lessen my train, and call them riotous !
 All men approved of choice and rarest parts,
 That each particular of duty know—
 How small, Cordelia, was thy fault ? Oh Lear !
 Beat at that gate which let thy folly in,
 And thy dear judgment out ; go, go, my people.

THIS all other actors speak with that kind of rage, with which a drunken shoemaker curses his

his daughter that has secretly taken his money from him, and prevented his going to the ale-house ; it is indeed a sheer scolding. In Mr. Garrick it is a prince in anger, and every accompaniment expresses it thro' the whole passage. "How small Cordelia," &c. This reflection, so natural to human minds, and parents in particular, to compare what they think a less fault in one child, whilst they are suffering under the influence of a greater in another, is as truly express'd by the actor, as imagined by the poet ; and then reverting on himself at the words which follow, " Oh Lear," he absolutely imparts a power to them, which cannot be conceived but with much difficulty by those who have never beheld him : the whole bitter tide of resentment pours back on himself, and is as fully express'd from the fingers to the toes, thro' the flashing eye and keen feature, as Raphael has express'd the being possest, in his demoniac, in his picture of the transfiguration ; and in these words, the soul of every hearer shivers as he pronounces them,

Blasts upon thee ;
Th' untainted woundings of a father's curse
Pierce ev'ry sense about thee.

INDEED,

INDEED, I could not avoid expecting a paralytic stroke would wither every limb of Goneril; the power of expression seemed as if of necessity it must prevail over heaven.

THEN follows that which is so natural to the soul of man in excessive anger, when it suffers equally from the faults of others and itself, turning back with threats upon this weakness, which had made him weep, he utters with the utmost internal sensibility, and yet weeps in opposition to his own resolution,

Old fond eyes,
Lament this cause again, I'll pluck ye out,
And cast you with the waters that ye lose
To temper clay.

IT is not possible to decide which is superior in the knowledge of nature, the poet who wrote, or the player who animates these passages. Afterwards when he begins

Hear, nature,
And passes on to that most beautiful of all expressions,

How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is,
To have a thankless child !

ALL

ALL is so firmly and interestingly express'd, with attitude and action so becoming the occasion, that, forgetting where I am, astonishment seizes me that Goneril has power to go off the stage unblasted at this imprecation: so perfectly the character is realized by every part of the player.

I THOUGHT to have instance'd nothing of his powers in the second act, but it is impossible to omit those starts of expression which accompany so perfectly the ideas of the poet in answer to the following words of Gloster,

You know the firey quality of the duke.

Lear replies,

Vengeance, death, plague, confusion!

Firey! What quality—why Gloster, Gloster,
I'd speak with the duke of Cornwall and his wife.

THESE and many other passages are spoken so justly, and with so much emphasis, that their influence on the hearer is amazing: they appear amidst the tempest of his mind, like flashes of lightening in a stormy night, making the horrors more visible.

In the third act, Shakespeare, into whose hand nature had given the clue that leads thro' all her labyrinth of variety, reserving the other end to herself, has placed Lear amidst thunder-storms, whirlwind, rain, and fire; in this part he shews how every object finds some connection with those of a mind in deep distress. Lear says,

Rumble thy fill ; fight whirlwind, rain, and fire ;
Not fire, wind, rain, or thunder, are my
Daughters.

I tax not you, ye elements, with unkindness ;
I never gave you kingdoms, call'd ye children ;
You owe me no obedience ; then let fall Y
Your horrible pleasure ; here I stand your slave,
A poor infirm, weak, and despis'd old man.

Till the last line he agrees, that these elements owe him no gratitude or obedience, because unallied to him by birth, or duty ; yet, the last line recalling his present condition to his own imagination, he immediately conceives it a kind of mean cruelty to join with two disobedient daughters, and says,

Yet

Yet will I call you servile ministers,
 That have with two pernicious daughters join'd
 Their engendered battle, against a head
 So old and white as mine ; oh ! oh ! 'tis foul.

This speech is spoken at first with defiance ; then, as the sense changes, the player falls into an acquiescence with this suffering ; till coming to the last part, he feels with much contempt, that coward cruelty of basely joining with the perpetrators of filial disobedience ; this is performed with such natural and easy transition, as if his soul conceived originally every sensation, as they follow one another in the poet.

As the madness advances in the character of Lear, it increases in the action and expression of the player ; you scarce see where he first begins, and yet find he is mad before Kent says,

I fear'd 'twould come to this ; his wits are gone.

It steals so gradually and imperceptibly, the difference grows like a colour which runs on from the lightest to the darkest tint without perceiving the shades, but by comparing them

at different parts of the whole : when he enters mad in the fourth act, with the mock ensigns of majesty on him, thro' this whole scene, that which the poet has marked so strongly, the player has also preserved ; that satyric turn, which accompanies madness arising from wrongs, is imitatively conceived by the poet, and sustained by the player ; that vague and fugitive manner of pronouncing, mixt with the sarcastic touches of expression, is truly exhibited ; and as in the poet's writings, so in the player's behaviour, the king is never one moment forgotten ; it is royalty in lunacy : to quote every passage, would make a letter a whole play.

In that part of the fourth act where Lear recovers from his sleep, as the poet who knew that sound intellect must not appear too suddenly in such instances of lunacy, so the player recovers his mind as gradually as he lost it, and at length distrusting his being recovered, he says,

I will not swear these are my hands.

Cordelia answers,

look

O look upon me, Sir,
And hold your hands in benediction o'er me.
No Sir, you must not kneel.

When Lear kneeling, the player pronounces with such pathetic simplicity,

Pray do not mock me,
I am a very foolish, fond old man,
Four score and upwards; and to deal plainly
with you,
I fear I am not in my perfect mind.

Who ever at the uttering of these words, as Mr. Garrick speaks them, can avoid joining with Cordelia, must be more hardened than Goneril, or Regan.

She says,

Then farewell to patience : witness for me,
Ye mighty powers, I ne'er complain'd till now.

With what knowledge of human nature was this written ! When a mind, exhausted by its former wildness, recovers, nothing is so weak and vacillating :

cillating : the unornamented simplicity of Lear's words, therefore, has more sublimity and pathos, than all the powers of figure and metaphor could impart to them ; and as it was imagined by Shakespeare, it is spoken by Mr. Garrick : my tears have ever testified this approbation.

THE remaining part of this act is equally imitable ; pray tell me, Madam, what art is this, which running from anger to rage, to madness, then softens and sinks into the timid and suppliant in poet and player ; what compass and what power of nature must those possess, who are equal to this variety and force ?

IN the fifth act, where the old king sleeps in the lap of Cordelia, he breaks out,

Charge, charge upon their flank, their last wing halts.

Push, push the battle, and the day's our own ;
Their ranks are broke : down with Albany.
Who holds my hands ?

This he pronounces in that imperfect and indistinct manner, which attends those who talk in

their sleep, with expression of anger, yet different from that of madness or a sound mind; then wakes with a gentle exclamation,

Oh thou deceiving sleep!

I was this very minute on the chace,

And now a prisoner here.—

THIS play terminates happily, as it is acted different from the manner in which Shakespeare wrote it; Cordelia is made Queen, and Lear retires to pass away his life in quietness and devotion: many of the passages are transposed from the order they stand in the original; for that reason I have sent you the alteration, that you may see it as it is played: the words which express the joy at the thoughts of Cordelia's being a queen, are spoken with an emphasis and energy, which is peculiar to Mr. Garrick only; and tho' the poet is no longer visible in this place, the player sustains his character in this also.

THUS in anger, in grief, in madness, in revenge, in weakness, in contempt, in joy, all is equally natural and amazing; the same poet fancies

sies all these, the same player follows him with equal justice.

Does it not seem probable then, Madam, that the genius of a player is more analogous to the painter and musician, than to the poet; he rather knows with what attitude, tone of voice, and expression, characters already written should be expressed and acted; than conceives with what words the characters in a story painted by Dominiquino, Poussin, or other eminent artists, should be animated; he can better adjust sounds to poetical compositions, than invent poetry for airs already made.

THE mind of man then, which is uncontaminated in action and expression with the borrowed aid of mimickry, is real genius; and, if it was not unpolite in writing to a lady, I could end with a syllogism, that this actor whom I have too imperfectly described in this letter, is undoubtedly so, and of a much superior nature to a mediocre poet, indeed, on a level with great painters, and great musicians, a Raphael or Corelli. I am,

Your most obedient servant,

F I N I S.



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